

STARS AND STRIPES®

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GIs who refused convoy won't face courts-martial

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Heartfelt goodbye

793rd MP
Battalion
deploys to
Iraq

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Damian Anderson hugs his girlfriend early Monday morning before he and the rest of the 793rd Military Police Battalion boarded buses to embark on their Iraq deployment. The battalion, based in Bamberg, Germany, will be stationed at a forward operating base north of Baghdad.

RENATE BOHLEN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

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NewsTracker ... What's new with old news

World

Ukraine election turmoil: Ukraine's leader attempted to ease fears he might hinder a repeat of the fraud-ridden presidential runoff, pledging Monday to honor the Supreme Court's call for a repeat vote.



Kuchma

Outgoing President Leonid Kuchma's comments, delivered at a meeting of economic ministers, were his first public reaction to Friday's court decision. "I am ready for further steps to ease the absolutely baseless tension in society," Kuchma said. He proposed parliament consider introducing changes in the electoral law and the constitution, saying "I am ready to sign them both in the session hall."

The constitution, saying "I am ready to sign them both in the session hall."

Deadly mine explosion: An explosion at a coal mine in central Kazakhstan that killed 23 people over the weekend was ignited by a methane blowout, according to news reports.

The blast in Shaktinsk, a town about 120 miles south of the capital Astana, occurred early Sunday while 87 miners were in the shaft.

Twenty-three miners died and three were wounded, one seriously, the Emergencies Agency said in a statement Monday.

A commission led by Energy Minister Vladimir Shkolnik concluded that the blast "occurred following a sudden outburst of methane," the Kazakhstan Today news agency quoted Shkolnik as saying.

Controversial Kosovo election: Kosovo's new prime minister assumed office Monday despite repeated appeals from Serbia, which accuses him of war crimes, for the United Nations to prevent him coming to power.

Ramush Haradinaj, a former rebel commander, shook hands with outgoing Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi as he moved into the government offices.

U.N. war crimes investigators recently questioned him on his role during the province's 1998-1999 war between ethnic Albanian separatists and Serb authorities, but no charges have been brought.

He denies any involvement in war crimes.

North Korea nuclear weapons: The U.S. envoy to six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons programs will visit South Korea this week in efforts to revive the stalled negotiations, officials said Monday.

Joseph DeTrani is scheduled to meet his counterpart, Cho Tae-yong, chief of Seoul's task force for the nuclear dispute, during a two-day visit starting Wednesday.

The visit "is part of active cooperation that the two countries have been devoting following the South Korea-U.S. summit for the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue," the Foreign Ministry said.

Army depot standoff: A French soldier who locked himself in an explosives depot and threatened to blow it up surrendered Monday, ending a three-day standoff, the Interior Ministry said.

Officials said Regis Le Tonic, a 46-year-old



Church abuse settlement: A parishioner hugs Bishop Tod D. Brown after Mass on Sunday at Holy Family Cathedral Church in Orange, Calif. Brown told parishioners he can finally sleep through the night now that he has ended a long and at times bitter legal battle by agreeing to the nation's largest settlement for victims of sexual abuse by clergy. The \$100 million settlement, announced Thursday and expected to be finalized this week, will be paid by the church and its insurers to 87 victims. "The victims will be fairly compensated, and at the same time, our diocese will be able to continue our mission of service," he said.

warrant officer and explosives expert, had been angry about being forced to retire.

Le Tonic, who worked at the facility about 60 miles east of Paris, seized control of the depot Friday, officials said.

Col. Patrick Chaniiau, an army spokesman, said officials had found a letter outside the depot from Le Tonic demanding that the army reconsider his request for a promotion that could have prolonged his career.

they returned to their seats.

Mother charged in baby's death: The stepfather of a Plano, Texas, woman charged with murder after allegedly severing her 10-month-old daughter's arms said he believes she was dangerously consumed by a self-described prophet and his church.

Mick Macaulay said he believes Dena Schlosser was mentally ill. He added, however, that he also thinks the teachings of Doyle Davidson played a role. "I don't think there's any question that what we saw happen here is postpartum psychosis," Macaulay said. "But that doesn't mean there aren't dynamics in force to push the person toward the psychotic break."

Davidson says he's had little interaction with Dena since Schlosser and her husband began attending his roughly 200-member church in 2002.

Slain Utah wife: The family of a Utah murder victim has removed her married surname from her grave's headstone after her husband was charged with killing her and dumping her body in a trash bin.

Lord Hacking's family changed the headstone, which now reads "Lori Kay Soares" — her maiden name.

Mark Hacking reported in July that his 27-year-old wife had failed to return from an early morning jog, setting off extensive searches by volunteers and police.

He later allegedly admitted to his brothers he shot her as she slept and disposed of her body in a trash bin. He has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder and his trial is set to begin April 18.

Stories and photos from wire services

War on terrorism

Alleged plot against Alawi: Authorities searched a building in Berlin on Monday while investigating an alleged plot to attack Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Alawi during his visit last week.

A judge in Karlsruhe issued an official arrest warrant Saturday for three Iraqis accused of belonging to Ansar al-Islam, a group that has mounted attacks on U.S. and allied forces in Iraq since last year's invasion.

They had been detained Friday after surveillance investigators noticed increased activity, phone calls and suspicious movements suggesting they planned to attack Alawi during his visit, prosecutors said.

States

Robert Blake murder trial: Opening statements in actor Robert Blake's murder trial were delayed Monday for two weeks because of the theft of his defense attorney's computer.

Attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach told the court that he would need more time to prepare because he lost materials in the computer taken in a burglary from his home.

Superior Court Judge Darlene Schenmp granted a delay until Dec. 20 and questioned jurors individually about what they had heard about the case and whether it would influence them during the trial. All of

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Romania wants Marine suspected in accident

BY CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

The Romanian government has requested that a U.S. Marine return to Bucharest for questioning in a Friday night auto accident that killed a popular Romanian musician.

Staff Sgt. Christopher R. VanGoethem, 31, commander of the security detachment that guards the U.S. embassy in Bucharest, is suspected of crashing an embassy-owned SUV into a taxi, killing Teofil Peter, a veteran rock musician and producer, Romanian police said.

Breath tests indicated that VanGoethem had been drinking alcohol, Romanian police told The Associated Press.

Car wreck killed country's popular rock musician

VanGoethem, who was not injured, was transported some time after the accident to Marine Security Group's Company II headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, a Marine spokesman said on Monday. The spokesman added that VanGoethem was likely to return to his battalion headquarters in Quantico, Va.

But the Romanian Foreign Ministry said in a statement Sunday that it had learned "with consternation" that the Marine had left the country and that it had asked U.S. authorities to bring him back and waive his diplomatic immunity so he could face justice.

The Marine spokesman, Maj.

Matthew Morgan of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade of Camp Lejeune, N.C., said the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is investigating the incident. Morgan said that VanGoethem had not been charged with a crime.

NCIS agents were scheduled to arrive Tuesday in Bucharest, according to a U.S. government official in Bucharest, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official said VanGoethem "is entitled to certain immunities under international law as an accredited member of embassy staff." The official said he did not know if VanGoethem was immune from being prosecuted in this case.

The official said that Romanian police gave VanGoethem a breath-analysis test. He added that there was "some disagreement between American and Romanian authorities over who would administer" a blood test. The official said one was eventually administered and that U.S. authorities took custody of the results.

U.S. Ambassador Jack Dyer Crouch said Sunday that the embassy regretted the incident. Romanian state news agency Rompres reported.

Crouch said the U.S. Marine Corps will cooperate with Romanian authorities in their investigation.

A decision on whether to hand over the Marine to Romanian authorities will be made after the Romanian and NCIS investigations are complete, Crouch said.

Crouch spoke to Peter's son earlier Monday, expressing condolences for the family's loss, the embassy said.

Peter's death caused an outpouring of emotion in Romania. In his native region of Transylvania, radio stations played his group's music all night Saturday in tribute.

Peter was riding in the passenger seat of the taxi. The driver escaped with minor injuries.

Stars and Stripes reporter Scott Shaw and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

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USAREUR band makes joyful noise

'Winter Wonderland' concert for families of deployed troops

BY JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

SCHWETZINGEN, Germany — The United States Army Europe Band and Chorus are warming up for their "Winter Wonderland" holiday concert series beginning Wednesday.

They will present six holiday shows in several cities across Germany, as well as feature guest artist Melissa Fontaine, a well-known American opera singer and the wife of a USAREUR band trumpet player.

Performances will be particularly special for families with deployed servicemen, since the show will follow a story line full of singing, dancing and a lot of holiday favorites centered around deployments, according to Lt. Col. Tom Palmatier, USAREUR Band and Chorus commander.

The first half of the Winter Wonderland show will primarily be band

music with several solo vocal pieces.

The second half of the show will have the chorus singing, props and dancing.

Plus, there will also be music for the Hanukkah season, he said.

"You can really expect something for all ages," Palmatier said during a rehearsal break on



JESSICA INIGO/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Ryan Christianson practices holiday tunes on the bassoon during a rehearsal at Thompkins Barracks in Schwetzingen, Germany, on Monday. The USAREUR Band and Chorus will be performing the "Winter Wonderland" performance especially for families with deployed servicemen, according to the commander.

Tompkins Barracks in Schwetzingen on Monday. "There will be a lot of old favorites, but also we have some R&B pieces — the Boyz II Men version — and some other very new, contemporary, pieces."

Palmatier said the yearly holiday concert series is also important for German-American relations.

"Most of the concert series is attended by lots and lots of Germans, which is great because the two cultures get a chance to know each other better."

The band has been doing programs that help promote this friendship for decades," said Palmatier, who is also receiving the Gold Medal for Service award from the city of Eppelheim during their concert show Sunday after the intermission.

Inge Burck, who volunteers for the Eppelheim mayor for American relation issues, said Palmatier is the first American to ever receive the award and he was nominated anonymously by more than 20 city council members.

"He was nominated for many reasons, but the main reason is that he promotes inter-cultural relations in all aspects of his life, not only through his music," Burck said during a telephone interview.

Throughout the past year, the USAREUR Band and Chorus have done 250 performances in 20 different countries, including performing for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France, and the Jazz Band playing in a funeral festival and putting out their first CD.

After the concert series, the chorus will be deploying to Iraq over the holiday season and possibly spending Christmas Day with troops of the Big Red One, Palmatier said.

For more information on the holiday concert series, call DSN 379-6146 or civilian 602-092-806146.

E-mail Jessica Inigo at: inigo@mail.strips.osd.mil

Wiesbaden soldier on trial for murder

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — A Wiesbaden soldier on trial for murder turned a normal fistfight into a deadly brawl when he brandished his pocketknife and started to lash out, Army prosecutors said Monday.

The general court-martial of Pvt. Nestor K. Velazquez, 19, who is accused of unpremeditated murder, began with prosecutors charging he needlessly stabbed a man to death during an April bar fight in Mainz-Kastell. "He's guilty because he elevated a simple fistfight into a knife fight," said Capt. Charles Kovats, one of the prosecutors in the case.

Defense attorneys, however, said in their opening arguments that Army prosecutors were telling "only half the story."

Velazquez was trying to break up a fight involving a fellow soldier, defense attorneys said, and the fight turned into a chaotic brawl in which the soldiers were vastly outnumbered. In addition, the victim, said the case, Santo Scardino, was on drugs at the time of the incident, according to Capt. John Stanfield, the lead defense attorney.

"This was not a mere fistfight ... [Velazquez] was in fear for his life," Stanfield said.

Velazquez is charged with fatally stabbing Scardino, an 18-year-old from Italy, during the fight at the Euro Palace on April 18. Three Germans and a Turkish man also were injured during the incident.

Velazquez is assigned to the

Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Armored Division's Support Command in Wiesbaden. The New York City native joined the Army in July 2003 and arrived in Germany in late February this year.

On the opening day of the trial, prosecutors called several witnesses to the stand, including Pfc. Anquan Huggins, a 1st AD soldier who was with Velazquez in the bar.

Huggins admitted to throwing the first punch, but said he did so only after

Scardino grabbed him. "He had some friends with him, about six or seven guys [standing] behind him," Huggins testified.

Huggins said that he did not want to get involved with Velazquez with the knife, but that he heard glass breaking around him and feared for his own safety.

Another witness who took the stand, Christian Rein, said that he was Scardino's friend. Rein said that he was coming to the aid of his friend and attempted to mediate the disturbance, but the situation soon spun out of control.

Rein was one of the people stabbed in the melee.

"There were glasses and ashtrays flying through the air," Rein said.

The case is being heard by a six-member panel of officers and senior noncommissioned officers. The trial, which is expected to last all week, resumes Tuesday morning at Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

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ED BAXTER/Military Sealift Command

The MV American Cormorant sits partially submerged near Southampton, England, last month as workers prepare to load floating Army equipment before the ship's transit to the Middle East.

Mideast-bound MSC cargo ship can sink, still 'swim'

BY JASON CHUDY

Stars and Stripes

The Military Sealift Command's MV American Cormorant, headed to the Middle East, partially sunk in the channel at Southampton, England, late last month.

The ship, sitting half in the water, definitely turned some heads. "I saw many people on [passing] ferry decks pointing ... in disbelief," said Military Sealift Command Europe public affairs officer Ed Baxter. "They obviously feared the worst," he said. "But little did they know the ship had sunk itself intentionally."

The Cormorant is a float-on/float-off ship, which has a unique capability of partially sinking to take on its floating cargo. Once the cargo is in place, the 738-foot, 71,000-ton ship floats back up to the surface.

The MSC-chartered vessel is

designed to transport small warcraft for the U.S. Army.

The ship's trip began in Dakar, Senegal, early last month, where "cradles" for the equipment were installed on her main cargo deck. The ship then sailed to Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where guideposts were welded on the deck.

In Southampton, the ship loaded nearly 4,200 tons of cargo, including three small tugboats, four small landing craft, a crane barge, a fuel barge and two larger landing craft.

The equipment, which came from the nearby Army Forward Support Base at Hythe, is part of the Army's pre-positioned port opening package. The equipment helps the Army to open a port where normal facilities may have been damaged or destroyed.

The ship sinks in the same manner as a submarine — it takes on

water as ballast, which causes the ship to sink. Its main deck can sink to 26 feet below the water's surface, with only the ship's front forecastle and back superstructure remaining above the water.

It takes about six hours to sink and another six to re-float American Cormorant.

American Cormorant was built in 1975 in Sweden as an oil tanker. In 1982, it was modified as a semi-submersible and used to carry offshore oil rigs.

Since then, the American Cormorant has carried British landing craft for the war in the Falklands, and supplied equipment to U.S. forces in Somalia in the early 1990s. Another MSC-chartered float-on/float off ship, M/V Blue Marlin, was used to carry the damaged destroyer USS Cole to the United States from Aden, Yemen, after Cole was attacked in Oct. 2000.

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case, the military equivalent of a civilian preliminary hearing, and was not called on to testify. But five members of his unit who witnessed the alleged killing gave evidence to military defense and prosecution lawyers.

Suit contests extended enlistments

WASHINGTON — Eight soldiers are challenging the Army's policy requiring them to serve longer than the terms of their enlistment contracts.

In a lawsuit being filed Monday in federal court, the soldiers are seeking a judge's order requiring the Army to immediately release them from service.

"The Army made an agreement with me and I expected them to honor it," said David Qualls, one of the plaintiffs. He signed up in July 2003 for a one-year stint in the Arkansas National Guard but has been told he will remain on active duty in Iraq until next year.

Under the Pentagon's stop-loss program, the Army can extend enlistments during war or national emergencies as a way to promote continuity and cohesiveness.

The policy, invoked in June, could keep tens of thousands of personnel in the military beyond their expected departure. The policy was also used during the buildup to the 1991 Gulf War.

From staff and wire reports

Gays expelled from military file legal challenge to policy

BY NANCY ZUCKERBROD
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Twelve gays expelled from the military because of their sexual orientation filed a legal challenge Monday to the Pentagon's 11-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Boston, cited last year's landmark Supreme Court ruling that overturned state laws making gay sex a crime.

Other courts have upheld the policy, approved by Congress and put in place by the Clinton administration. However, those decisions were before the 2003 Supreme Court ruling, said C. Dixon Osburn, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which is advising the plaintiffs.

"We think the gay ban can no longer survive constitutionally," he said. "You do not ban an entire class of people just to accommodate prejudice."

Former Lt. j.g. Jen Kopfschein of San Diego was dismissed from the Navy after she told her com-

manding officer she was a lesbian.

Kopfschein, a plaintiff in the case, said Monday hiding her identity felt dishonest.

"Today, I'm here to stand up for what is right," she said.

"Don't ask, don't tell" is a horrible policy."

Justin Peacock, a former Coast Guard boatswain's mate from Knoxville, Tenn., and another plaintiff, was discharged after someone reported he was seen holding hands with another man.

"I would love to rejoin, but even if I don't get back in at least I could say I tried to get the policy changed," Peacock said.

Lt. Col. Joe Richard, a Pentagon spokesman, said officials have not seen the lawsuit and therefore could not comment on it.

"Don't ask, don't tell" allows gays and lesbians to serve in the military as long as they don't reveal their sexual orientation and abstain from homosexual activity. Before that the Pentagon barred homosexuals from military service.

Happy Hanukkah to troops



AP

Houston Cub Scout mother Dianne Zomper poses with a menorah and members of Congregation Enanu El's Pack 1190, who sent care packages to Jewish soldiers serving overseas. Zomper's son, Mitchell, along with other scouts prepared packages with candles, menorahs and dreidels to send to troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

Aviano airman pleads guilty to theft

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An airman assigned to the 31st Communications Squadron has pleaded guilty at court-martial last week to charges of stealing someone else's mail.

Airman 1st Class Eileen Bishop was charged with two specifications of stealing mail and another of opening someone else's mail. She was sentenced to three months' hard labor without confinement, reduction in rank to E-1 and forfeiture of \$300 pay for three months.

Soldier in court on murder charge

U.S. soldier Spc. Brent May, 22, of Salem, Ohio, faced a military court Monday charged with murdering an Iraqi man in Baghdad's Sadr City, an impoverished Shiite Muslim quarter of the capital, which was the scene of fierce clashes this year between U.S. troops and insurgents.

May is attached to Company C, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment from Fort Riley, Kan., and was charged in September on three counts of premeditated murder. But at Monday's hearing, conducted on a U.S. military base, officials ordered May to face just one charge. It was not immediately clear why the number of charges were reduced.

May did not enter a plea during the Article 32

23 GIs who refused convoy mission offered Article 15s

By RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq — None of the soldiers from the 343rd Quartermaster Company who refused to go on a convoy mission in October will face a court-martial, unless an individual soldier refuses one.

Instead, the 23 soldiers from the Rock Hill, S.C., Army Reserve unit will face Article 15 nonjudicial punishments or other administrative actions, said Maj. Richard Spiegel, a spokesman for the 13th Corps Support Command, the parent headquarters of the 343rd.

The final five cases were decided last week after the conclusion of an investigation into the Oct. 13 incident to determine if the soldiers' actions violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The other 18 involved all those to receive nonjudicial punishment and the military is not required to release what punishments were meted out.

"After consulting with a law-

yer, the soldiers can proceed with the Article 15 or demand a court-martial," said Spiegel.

At the time, the soldiers refused to drive fuel and water trucks from Tallil Air Base, their home in southern Iraq, to Taji, a base north of Baghdad. After the incident, an Army statement said the soldiers "raised some valid concerns."

Soldiers refused the orders because not all of the vehicles were armored, some vehicles were in poor condition and the route, known as Main Supply Route Tampa, was rife with ambushes, roadside bombs or both, according to military and news reports in October.

Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, commander of 13th COSCOM, immediately ordered a stand-down of the unit for a safety and maintenance check. He also asked for two investigations: One to determine if the UCMJ had been violated, and one to determine if there was a systemic problem.

The result of the second investigation, done by 13th COSCOM officials, could not be released until the other legal process had been completed, said Spiegel, citing the Privacy Act for soldiers involved.

The unit's company commander, whose name has not been released, was relieved of duty following the incident "at her request," Spiegel said. None of the soldiers who refused the order have been identified as well.

Under an Article 15, a soldier faces a possible combination of penalties, including: A reduction to the lowest rank for specialists and below, or reduction by one rank for sergeants and staff sergeants; extra duty for up to 45 days; and forfeiture of a half-month's pay for two months.

Spiegel declined to speculate on why none of the soldiers will face a court-martial.

Refusing an order during war time could have been considered mutiny and is punishable by death or prison, according to the UCMJ.

"There was a full, complete in-

vestigation into what happened," he said. "Based on that investigation, the commander of the 300th ASG (Col. Pamela Adams) took the action she felt was appropriate. She has seen all the facts. This is what she felt was appropriate."

The group received an outpouring of support from family in the States and from some stationed in Iraq and Kuwait.

"There are troops who support you and believe you did the right thing," said one soldier in Kuwait in Stars and Stripes. "You took a stand, not just for yourselves, but for every member of the military."

Others said they understood why the soldiers refused the order, but, at the time, questioned their methods.

Others who perform the same duty as those in the 343rd thought the punishment should have been harsher.

"I feel that's quite unfortunate," said Sgt. Hans Rössdorf of the 655th Transportation Company, also a reserve unit, when told the soldiers would not face courts-martial. "Mission first. [Their actions] were totally un-military. You're given a mission, you've got to do the mission."

The process now is in the hands of the soldiers who must decide if they will accept the nonjudicial punishment or take it to a court-martial, Spiegel said.

If they face the Article 15 hearing, Spiegel said, soldiers will be allowed to present witnesses on their behalf and plead their case.

The unit went back to work Nov. 11 and all the soldiers are back on the job, Spiegel said.

"All the soldiers are back to full duty," he said. "Some of them were moved to other units in the battalion. That was done to preserve the integrity of the investigation."

The unit, he said, is back to performing its mission of delivering fuel and water.

"They've been doing an exemplary job, no issues," Spiegel said.

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Medics treat Iraqi policeman Ahmed Ali in Baqouba, Iraq, on Monday. The officer was wounded Monday when gunman tried to assassinate an Iraqi police colonel in Baqouba.

Troops battle gunmen on busy Baghdad street

By PAUL GARWOOD
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. troops fought a gunbattle with insurgents along a busy street in Baghdad on Monday, witnesses said, while five U.S. troops were reported killed in separate clashes in a volatile western province.

Fighting in Baghdad broke out after armed rebels appeared on the busy Haifa Street, saying they were hunting for Iraqis collaborating with U.S.-led forces.

Witnesses said they shot and killed a man they claimed was working for the Americans. Rebels also were seen on a square just three blocks from the Green Zone that houses Iraq's interim government and the U.S. Embassy.

The U.S. military had no immediate comment, but witnesses said GIs supported by armored vehicles attacked the gunmen.

Earlier Monday, three insurgents were killed and four wounded in clashes with U.S. forces in Haditha, 140 miles northwest of Baghdad in the volatile Anbar province, according to Dr. Bassem Izaldeen of Haditha Hospital.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force also said three servicemen were attached to the Marines died in two incidents Sunday in the western province, which includes the battleground cities of Fallujah and Ramadi. Earlier, the military said two Marines had been killed in action in Anbar on Friday.

On Sunday gunmen opened fire at a bus, as it dropped off Iraqis employed by coalition forces at a weapons dump in Tikrit, 80 miles north of Baghdad, said Capt. Bill Copperrill, spokesman for the Tikrit-based U.S. 1st Infantry Division. Copperrill said 17 people died and 13 were wounded in the attack. Survivors said about seven guerrillas were involved.

About an hour later, a suicide car bomber drove into an Iraqi National Guard checkpoint in Beji, 75 miles to the north, detonating his explosives-packed vehicle, Copperrill said. Three guardsmen were killed and 18 wounded, Copperrill said.

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army claimed responsibility for the Tikrit attack. The statement, which appeared on the group's Web site.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, at least 1,271 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 988 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said as of Friday. The figures include three military civilians. The department did not update its numbers over the weekend.

The AP count is even higher than the Defense Department's tally last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,133 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 879 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ Two U.S. soldiers died Saturday during an air strike during a patrol in Mosul.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Pfc. George D. Harrison, 22, Knoxville, Tenn., died Thursday in Mosul when his vehicle came under fire, assigned to the 293rd Military Police Company, 3rd Military Police Battalion (Provisional), 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

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Bamberger military police deploy to Iraq

BY RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

BAMBERG, Germany — More than 60 soldiers from the 793rd Military Police Battalion deployed Monday to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The soldiers, from the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, will be stationed at a forward operating base north of Baghdad, according to Lt. Col. Dan McElroy, battalion commander.

In Iraq, the detachment will

have three U.S. Army National Guard units attached to it for the one-year deployment, and will fall under the 42nd Military Police Brigade out of Fort Lewis, Wash.

The unit's missions will include base security and convoy security, McElroy said.

To prepare for the deployment, detachment leaders went to Iraq in October. McElroy and battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Bernard McPherson also visited the National Guard units that would deploy with them.

Additionally, over the past several months, the unit has gone through a mission-rehearsal exercise at Fort Lewis, convoy live-fire training at Grafenwöhr Training Area and a briefing and tour at the Mannheim Confinement Facility. The unit also trained at the Warner Barracks Local Training Area up until it began block leave in November, McElroy said.

"Our training was nonstop, long and stressful," said Sgt. Matthew Montell, an MP with the 793rd. "The first sergeant put us through grueling, long hours, but it was the stuff we needed to keep vigilant while we are in Iraq."

The soldiers also had time to get things in order for their families.

"Everything is tied up at home," said Spc. Stephen Henderson. "The car is set, the dog's shots are done for the year and I set up an alarm. I want to be sure that, back here, there is nothing to worry about."

The soldiers have faith in the



PHOTOS BY RENATE BOHLEN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 793rd Military Police Battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment load their bags onto buses early Monday morning as they prepare for a one-year deployment to Iraq.

unit's Family Readiness Group, as well.

Montell said that even though his wife, who is German, speaks little English, he feels he can count on the FRG to watch out for her.

"We have a great FRG and rear detachment, and I know they will

help her if she needs anything," Montell said.

McElroy said he appreciates the support of the spouses.

"This is hard on the families — the sacrifices they have to make," McElroy said. "I can see in their faces that they are sad their spouses

are leaving. But I believe they know that this is important, this fight in the global war on terrorism. Whenever I talk to the families, they make it clear that they support us."

E-mail Rick Emert at: emert@mail.strips.osd.mil



Spc. Rebecca Bender, left, of the 793rd Military Police Battalion, says goodbye to her husband, Spc. Brent Bender, Sunday at Warner Barracks, Germany.

As Iraqi weather drops, troops try to keep warm

In Iraq, the weather has suddenly and shockingly dropped from 100-degree days to near-freezing nights.

One might think this would be the perfect time for soldiers to pull out their brand-new, toasty-warm \$99.95 Polartec U.S. Army Spear jackets. They are among the favorite pieces of gear from the Rapid Fielding Initiative, a Christmas-like cascade of high-tech presents shovelled upon the 138,000 troops as they arrived in Iraq last spring.

But most jackets remain in soldiers' duffel bags around the country.

The brass in Baghdad have barred soldiers from wearing the jackets because, according to one sergeant major in the know, they do not have rank and unit insignia on them, and because they are the wrong color (black).

Actually, it is permissible to wear them underneath the sand-colored desert camouflage uniforms. Kind of like pulling on a T-shirt over your ski jacket.

As a result of this order, some \$1.3 million worth of fleece jackets are now moth food — at least until the 138,000 troops in Iraq get home next spring.

Some unit commanders have quietly shuffled this order to the bottom of the stack, opting to overlook troops' donning of the forbidden fleece to stop their teeth from chattering while on all-night combat patrols in unheated Humvees.

In other units, though, the

MIDEAST NOTEBOOK

Steve Liewer

order is being strictly enforced. Which has set officers and soldiers alike to rolling their eyes and muttering about rule-making by the garrison-bound.

Words to talk about

The newbies from units like the 42nd Infantry Division and the 256th Brigade Combat Team have got to learn more in Iraq than how to defeat a tenacious, murderous enemy.

They've got to learn the lingo. As they settle-down for their "left-seat, right-seat" rides with the homebound units, they'll be informed that they are "FNGs" (for "friggin' new guys," or words to that effect) or "snappers," which has obscure origins in South Korean tours and means the same thing.

If they're out in the field, they'll learn to resent the REFs ("rear-echelon ... um, you get the rest") who hang out in Kuwait or Al Andada (Balad) or Danger (Tikrit), where many think they spend their time feasting on Subway and Burger King. Those guys are a bunch of "pogues," soldiers-speak for troops who are afraid to go "outside the wire" (off the base).

Like the outgoing troops, they'll

be singing the stop-loss blues, because of the U.S.A.R.M.Y. (Uncle Sam Ain't Released Me Yet). Have a great year, snappers.

Talented troops

Working hard in Iraq doesn't mean soldiers can't play hard between patrols or other duties. Nearly 200 troops attended a Morale, Welfare and Recreation sponsored talent show at Forward Operating Base Danger recently.

"Everyone understands that it's not the magnitude of the talent. It's more for the bonding and

kindred spirits," said Mary Lou Gallegos, MWR coordinator, in a 1st Infantry Division news release. "This is a chance for everyone to get together and make each other smile and have a good time."

While it's certain some of the soldiers showed off some under-appreciated skills and talents, others may still want to stick to their day jobs.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: liewer@mail.strips.osd.mil

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IN THE WORLD

U.S. Consulate in Saudi Arabia attacked

At least 8 people reported killed in three-hour assault

BY FAIZA SALEH AMBAH
The Associated Press

JIDDAH, Saudi Arabia — In a bold attack, Islamic militants threw explosives at the gate of the heavily guarded U.S. consulate in Jiddah on Monday, then forced their way into the building and held civilians at gunpoint, prompting a gunbattle. Eight people, including five local staff, were killed in the three-hour assault.

The Interior Ministry said three of the five attackers were killed, with the other two wounded and in custody.

Saudi security officials initially said four Saudi officials also died in the clash, but Interior Ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Mansour al-Turki later told the Associated Press that no officers were killed. He said one was seriously injured.

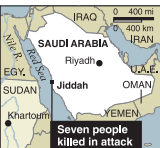
No Americans were killed or held at gunpoint, and just one American was slightly injured as consulate employees were rushed to a safe area in the compound as the attack began, a State Department official said.

It was the first major strike by militants inside Saudi Arabia since May and seemed a clear sign that the Saudi government's crackdown on al-Qaida linked extremists has not yet entirely succeeded.

"They want us to grow tired

U.S. Consulate hit

Islamic militants threw explosives at the gate of the U.S. consulate in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, Monday, then forced their way into the building.



Source: ESI

AP

and weary in the face of their willingness to kill randomly, kill innocent people," President Bush said at the White House after a meeting with interim Iraqi President Ghazi al-Yawer. "That's why these elections in Iraq are very important."

Bush also thanked Saudi Arabia for quelling the attack and said more would be learned about who was behind it.

"We could hear the gunshots outside, but we didn't know what was going on," the employee, who asked that his name not be used, told The Associated Press by telephone. "They were heavy at

times and not so heavy at other times."

The Saudi Interior Ministry statement did not mention hostages.

But a Saudi official, speaking from Riyadh on the condition of anonymity, said numerous civilians inside the compound were confronted by the attackers and held at gunpoint. The official said a gunbattle quickly ensued when Saudi security officials became concerned the civilians were about to be injured.

In Riyadh, U.S. Embassy spokeswoman Carol Kalin said four of the five employees killed held administrative jobs and one was a private contract guard on the consulate's payroll. Four other embassy workers — all hired locally — were hospitalized, Kalin said. She said all American employees were safe and none had been taken hostage.

Kalin said it was unclear if any of the U.S. Marine guards inside the consulate were involved in the gunbattle.

"We have accounted for all Americans on the compound in Jiddah and none of them are being held hostage," Kalin said.

As a precaution, she said, the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and consulate in Dhahran were closed to the public through Tuesday, with only emergency services available for American citizens, according to a statement posted by the U.S. Embassy after the attack.



AP

Smoke rises following an explosion in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, on Monday after Islamic militants attacked the heavily guarded U.S. Consulate in Jiddah with explosives and machine guns in an explosion and gunbattle that left at least eight people dead and several others injured.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro (Dec. 7)	\$1.37
British pound (Dec. 7)	0.72
Japanese yen (Dec. 7)	100.00
South Korean won (Dec. 7)	1,011.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.37
British pound	\$1.34
Canada (Dollar)	0.72
Denmark (Krone)	6.46
Euro (Euro)	0.72
Euro (Euro)	\$1.34
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.72
Hungary (Forint)	166.64
Iceland (Krona)	110.33
Israel (Sheqel)	1.80
Japan (Yen)	109.09
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.25
Norway (Krone)	5.74
Philippines (Peso)	55.86
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.59
Singapore (Dollar)	1.63
South Korea (Won)	1,041.45
Switzerland (Franc)	0.72
Thailand (Baht)	35.36
Taiwan (Dollar)	1.36

(Military exchange rates are those available to U.S. troops at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for U.S. troops. Commercial rates are those available to U.S. citizens in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For non-U.S. citizens, exchange rates are those available to U.S. citizens in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Commercial rates are inter-bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the dollar-to-pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

PRECIOUS METALS

London close	\$451.90
Silver	\$17.88

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.00
Discount rate	3.00
Three-month market	3.00
Three-month bill	2.75
Three-month T-bill	2.75
Source: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Inauguration security

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan and international forces laid a security ring around Kabul on Monday as dignitaries traveled from around the world for the inauguration of Hamid Karzai as Afghanistan's first popularly elected

president.

In their biggest operation since the October election, which Karzai won in a landslide, police and troops cordoned off the route from the city's battle-scarred airport to the presidential palace, where the U.S.-backed leader was to be sworn in Tuesday.

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Gift card cautions

The Associated Press

Gift cards are the perfect gift — they always fit, and never cost a fortune to send, right? But consumer advocates are cautioning that we need to be slightly more careful when it comes to such gifts.

In its December issue, Consumer Reports Money Adviser examines gift cards issued by both stores and banks and found that many come with fees, for purchase and for replacements. Also, many issuers impose maintenance fees and expiration dates.

Indeed, three New England states and the nation's largest

mall operator, Simon Property Group Inc., are battling in court over fees on the Visa-branded gift cards the Indianapolis-based company sells in nearly three-dozen states.

Before you grab such a card for a friend or relative, keep a few checks in mind:

■ Check expiration dates and all fees. This can usually be found in a pamphlet with the card or on the issuer's Web site.

■ Use such cards quickly.

■ Stick with store cards rather than bank-issued cards. The newsletter found that most retailers don't assess upfront fees.

■ Consider a cash gift. No fees, no expiration, and people really like it.

Trucks and cars with license plates from beyond Kabul were turned away at the city limits. NATO armored vehicles mounted extra patrols, and American helicopters scoured the mountains that encircle the capital.

"We are very aware that this is yet another opportunity for insurgent activity to take place while the international community's eyes are again focused on Afghanistan," NATO spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Ken MacKillop said.

9/11 label award

LONDON — Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Britain accepted substantial life damages and a public apology Monday from a magazine that had claimed he was directly responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

Prince Turki Al-Faisal filed suit in London's High Court against Hachette Filipacchi Associates, publishers of "Paris Match," over an article published in October 2003. The amount of damages was not revealed.

Wrecked pizza truck

HAMBURG, Germany — A truck carrying 20 tons of frozen pizza overturned on a highway in northern Germany early Monday, snarling traffic for more than five hours, a police spokesman said.

The truck flipped onto its side when trying to change lanes and skidded to a halt near the city of Hanover, police spokesman Harald Lampe-Schaer said.

Bombs explode in Spain

MADRID, Spain — Small bombs exploded in seven Spanish cities Monday following telephone warnings from the armed Basque separatist group ETA on the anniversary of Spain's constitution, which established the system of regional autonomy ETA abhors, officials said.

At least 18 people were slightly injured in the nearly simultaneous blasts in Valladolid, Leon and Santillana del Mar in the north, Avila and Ciudad Real in central Spain, Alicante in the east and Malaga in the south, the Interior Ministry said.

'Scandalous' training

PARIS — France's interior minister said Monday the training of airport sniffer dogs by hiding explosives in travelers' luggage was "scandalous," after police lost track of a bag with plastic explosives at Paris' main airport.

A small amount of plastic explosives were placed in a bag at Charles de Gaulle airport Friday, and possibly wound up on one of up to 90 flights that left Charles de Gaulle airport Friday.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Bush insists Iraq elections will be Jan. 30

By DEB RIECHMANN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush, on a day of new violence in the Middle East, expressed determination to see Iraq hold elections on Jan. 30 and said they would show that terrorists cannot

stop the march of democracy. Interim Iraqi President Ghazi al-Yawer said a majority of Iraqis want the elections to be held on schedule.

Meeting al-Yawer at the White House, Bush said that a free society in Iraq "will be a major defeat

for the terrorists." If terrorists were allowed to stop the election, it would "send a wrong signal to the world and send a wrong signal to the Iraqi people themselves."

Al-Yawer — an influential leader in Sunni Muslim regions of Iraq where the fiercest battles against insurgents have been

waged — wants Iraq's Jan. 30 election held on time, but other Sunni leaders want it to be postponed, saying the ongoing violence in these areas would keep people from voting.

"The attacks in Saudi Arabia remind us that the terrorists are still on the move," Bush said. "They're

interested in affecting the will of free countries. They want us to leave Saudi Arabia. They want us to leave Iraq."

"They want us to grow timid and weary in the face of their willingness to kill randomly, kill innocent people," Bush said. The president said the United States would do everything it could to make the elections in Iraq as safe as possible. "You can never guarantee 100 percent security," he said.

Al-Yawer expressed resolve to defeat the insurgents. "Right now we are faced with the armies of darkness," the interim president said. But he said that "victory is not only possible, it is a fact."

Afterward, he told reporters outside the White House that he believed it would take months, perhaps eight or so, for Iraq to build an effective security force, a move that would allow more American troops to return home.

Al-Yawer's visit to the White House is seen as a way to persuade Iraq's political minorities not to boycott the ballot. "I don't know how many Sunnis are going to be open to the message, but in Middle Eastern terms, it's very symbolic to invite somebody into your house from a community you've been fighting with," said James Phillips, a specialist on Iraq and the Middle East at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative Washington think tank.

"It shows an openness to some kind of political settlement. It's trying to encourage them [the Sunnis] to include themselves in the power structure and therefore help weaken the insurgency," Phillips said.

Following his session with al-Yawer, Bush met with Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade and Jordan's King Abdullah II.



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U.S. plans to buy more flu vaccine

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The federal government will announce a plan this week to purchase additional flu shots to help relieve the nation's shortage, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Monday.

Dr. Julie Gerberding told delegates at the American Medical Association's annual winter meeting that outgoing federal Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson is expected to make the announcement.

"We do have optimism additional doses can be purchased. We hope for an announcement later in the week from Secretary Thompson," Gerberding said.

Thompson said last month that the Food and Drug Administration has completed its inspection of the vaccine from foreign manufacturers that would be available on an investigational basis.

The vaccine is considered an investigational new drug because it was not developed under the supervision of the FDA.

Kennedy Center honors 6 for lifetime contributions

BY APARNA H. KUMAR

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On a night when Washington honored Elton John, Joan Sutherland, Warren Beatty and other legends of the arts, it was actor Robert Downey Jr. who offered to perform at the White House.



Davis



Dee

John, Beatty, opera diva Sutherland, composer-conductor John Williams and actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee were honored Sunday with a star-studded tribute at the Kennedy Center.

The six recipients of the 27th annual Kennedy

Center Honors were saluted for their lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts.

Downey referred to his own well-publicized drug arrests in a rambling tribute to John. He mimed being placed in handcuffs and said John taught him something "about the principle of surrender." The actor then told President Bush, who was in the audi-

ence, that he would be available "if you need me to play any, like, Christmas parties or stuff or weddings or all that."

John has been a vocal critic of the president. In November, he told the British magazine *Time* Out, "Bush and this administration are the worst thing that has ever happened to America."

But the rock legend was more diplomatic at a reception at the White House on Sunday afternoon. John said winning the Kennedy Center Honor "is about the icing on the cake."

The political gags were left to Downey, who said he — like losing presidential candidate John Kerry — was suffering "from acute symptoms of another dual-diagnosis disease of mine: the A.D.D. of course, the altruistic Democrat disorder."

That drew nervous laughter from the audience, which included Sen. Kerry as well as the president, first lady Laura Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne.

Jack Nicholson directed a less stinging political barb at fellow actor Beatty. "For years, Warren has dreamed of attending these awards," Nicholson said. "Unfortunately, not as a Kennedy honoree but as president of the United States."

The 78-year-old Sutherland, an Australian-born soprano, was saluted by fellow opera stars Sherill Milnes and Marilyn Horne, a previous honoree.

Williams, 72, is best known for his film scores for "Star Wars," "Jaws" and other movies. Director Steven Spielberg called him "a national treasure, as American

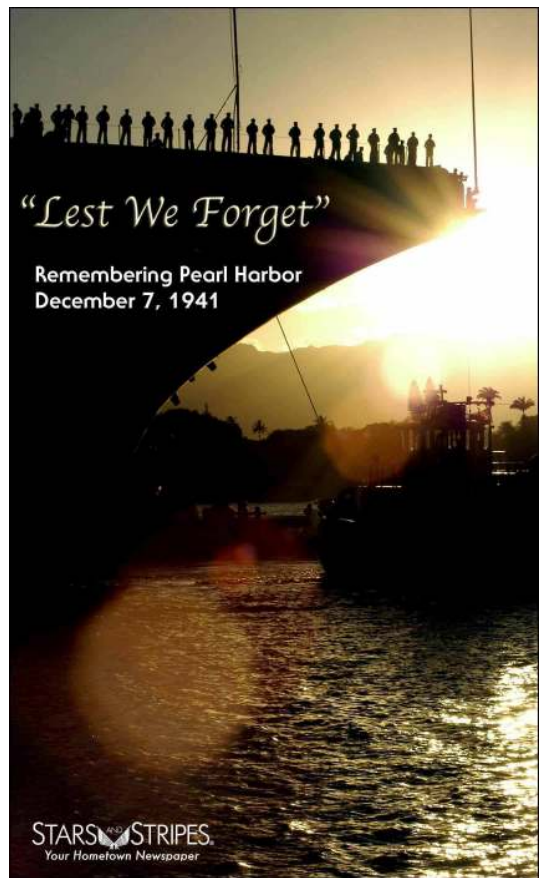
as apple pie and President Bush's mom."

Davis, 86, and Dee, 80, a husband-and-wife acting team, were feted for their long careers on stage and screen as well as their political activism. Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, who appeared in a recent Broadway revival of "A Raisin in the Sun," said he was inspired by Dee, who starred in the original production.



AP

From left to right, composer, conductor John Williams; soprano Joan Sutherland; actor, producer and director Warren Beatty; and singer Elton John, stand during the national anthem at the 27th annual Kennedy Center Honors at Washington's Kennedy Center on Sunday.



Rosa Parks allowed to stay in apartment free

BY JIM SCHAEFER

Knight Ridder/Tribune

DETROIT — Civil rights icon Rosa Parks, who in 2002 faced eviction from her home, will have a free place to live for the rest of her life.

Riverfront Associates, which owns the downtown Riverfront Apartments where Parks has lived since 1994, quietly decided in early October to allow Parks to stay there rent-free permanently.

"I thought it was the right thing to do," managing partner Peter Cummings said Friday. "This woman is an icon. She deserves an enormous amount of respect. In a way, I think it's an honor to be able to accord her that respect."

Days after the previously undisclosed gift, the Detroit Free Press reported on Oct. 15 that some of Parks' relatives were worried about her finances and whether she was being properly cared for. A Nov. 23 article chronicled lawsuits against two charities associ-

ated with Parks, the repossession of a vehicle and two eviction notices the Riverfront Apartments sent her in 2002.

The Free Press obtained an Oct. 11 letter from Cummings regarding the rent-free arrangement that also disclosed that Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit had been paying Parks' rent, which had been as high as \$1,800 a month.

The Rev. Charles Adams said Friday that his church discovered Parks needed financial help and began paying her rent in August 2003.

"We did not want her set out in the street," Adams said of Parks, who is not a member of Hartford. "We said we will do it for as long as is necessary. We didn't want to make a big noise out of it... It was a simple act of kindness."

In his letter to Adams, Cummings thanked the pastor for the church's contributions and relieved it of the monthly obligation.

Parks now is responsible only for her utilities, Cummings wrote.

STARS AND STRIPES
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High court won't hurry decision on tribunals

BY GINA HOLLAND
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court refused Monday to speed up consideration of a challenge to the government's plans to try foreign terror suspects before military tribunals.

Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a Yemeni who was a driver for Osama bin Laden, won his appeal in U.S. District Court. His lawyers want to skip an appeals court and have the Supreme Court decide the legality of the trials planned for Hamdan and potentially hundreds of others classified as "enemy combatants" who are being held at the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo, Cuba.

The Bush administration told the court there was no legal reason to deal more quickly with Hamdan's appeal, and that justices should let the U.S. Court of Ap-

peals for the District of Columbia Circuit handle the matter first. It has scheduled arguments on March 8.

Hamdan, 34, has denied supporting terrorism. But the government contends he was a member of al-Qaida and has charged him with conspiracy to commit war crimes, murder and terrorism.

The Bush administration has been criticized by groups like the American Civil Liberties Union for its plans for military commission trials. People tried before the commissions would not have the same legal rights as defendants in regular courts.

"Our country has a pressing need to know that those implicated in that war [on terrorism] are being treated in the way the Constitution, our statutes, and the laws of war demand," Washington attorney Neal Katyal wrote in the appeal for Hamdan.

Monday's action by the court does not dismiss the appeal.

Justices could still agree to hear the case, but they won't decide until early next year — potentially too late to hold arguments and issue a ruling before the end of the term in late June.

Last week, hundreds of members of the British and European Parliaments encouraged the court to hear the appeal.

U.S. District Judge James Robertson in Washington sided last month with Hamdan and said before anyone goes before a tribunal the government must first determine whether the suspects are prisoners of war entitled to more legal rights. He also said that the guidelines for the trials must be changed to comply with military justice rules.

The Supreme Court on Monday also:

■ Ruled that San Diego officials were justified in firing a policeman who sold

sexually explicit videotapes of himself in uniform.

■ Passed up a chance to consider if states can ban members of the Ku Klux Klan and other groups from wearing masks at public gatherings.

■ Heard arguments in a case that asks whether a black man was unfairly sentenced to death by a Texas jury stacked with whites.

■ Rejected an appeal by the National League of Cities that sought to classify cable-based broadband as a "cable service." That would have entitled cities to charge cable operators a 5 percent local tax.

■ Declined to clarify standards for suing employers who rescind health benefits they initially promised in early retirement packages.

■ Refused to consider whether a state may bar convicted employees from specializing with prisoners and their families out of work.

Sickle cell study halted after kids suffer strokes

BY DANIEL YEE
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — A study aimed at determining if some children with sickle cell anemia could be weaned off blood transfusion therapy has been halted because two young patients who stopped getting the procedure suffered strokes and others developed a high chance of strokes.

The National Institutes of Health issued a clinical alert Sunday recommending that doctors continue using blood transfusions to reduce the risk of stroke among young sickle cell patients, even though the treatment has its own risk.

The study, called STOP II, was funded by the NIH's National Heart, Lung and

Blood Institute and involved 23 U.S. medical centers and two in Canada.

The \$15 million study, which started in July 2000, was ended prematurely last month after 16 children with sickle cell anemia developed narrowed arteries and other risk factors for strokes after they stopped receiving blood transfusions. Two other children suffered strokes but are recovering, said Dr. Robert Adams, the study's principal investigator and professor of neurology at the Medical College of Georgia. The study "showed that when transfusions were discontinued after a minimum of 30 months, a significant number of children reverted to high risk," the federal agency's clinical alert said. Blood transfusions over the long-term can cause

dangerous accumulations of iron that can lead to heart problems and liver damage.

The original STOP study, which started in 1995, was halted two years later because transfusions were found to be so effective that researchers recommended all sickle cell children be given the treatment to prevent strokes.

"It takes a whole day, it's a tedious task," Channelle Allen of Augusta, Ga., said of the transfusions that her 11-year-old daughter Tisha has received. Tisha was one of the patients who developed a high stroke risk after ending transfusion therapy during the STOP II study and has resumed receiving the treatment. "I didn't want her to go back on blood [transfusions] but it was better for her," Allen said.



Channelle Allen, left, and her 11-year-old daughter, Tisha Allen, are shown outside of their home in Augusta, Ga. Tisha has sickle cell anemia and undergoes regular blood transfusions for her disease.

AP

Holiday Magic

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Ky. man accused in slayings seeks death

BY BRETT BARROUQUERE
The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — In what experts say is a rare occurrence, a man accused of murdering two children and attacking their mother has asked a judge to let him plead guilty and to sentence him to death.

"I only wish the judge to sentence me to death so no one can feel responsible for another's death, including mine," Marco Allen Chapman wrote in a letter to Judge Tony Frohlich read in court on October.

Chapman, 32, is due back in court Tuesday, when a doctor is expected to testify about his mental state and whether he understands what a guilty plea and death sentence would mean.

"His request is very well thought out," Linda Tally Smith, who is prosecuting Chapman, said last week. "The big question is, will he change his mind and what do we do if he does?"

Neither lawyers nor death penalty activists and researchers could provide statistics on how often someone pleads guilty to a capital crime and seeks a death sentence. But attorneys and activists agree it is rare.

The last time an inmate in Kentucky did so, he later changed his mind — but lost his appeal.

Dan Herb Johnson pleaded guilty and sought to be executed for the 1989 torture slaying of Helen Madden in the coin-operated laundry where she worked. He also pleaded guilty to robbery, burglary and sexual abuse.

A divided Kentucky Supreme Court rejected Johnson's later attempt to withdraw the plea, and he remains on death row.

"If you plead guilty, you waive your right to appeal," said Robert A. Harding, who teaches capital punishment law at the University of Kentucky law school. "There's nothing to appeal."

Chapman confessed to killing Cody Sharon, 6, and his sister, Chelbi Sharon, 7, on Aug. 23, 2002, in their home. He also admitted to tying up and repeatedly stabbing their mother, Carolyn Markberry. She recovered, as did her daughter Courtney, who also was stabbed but survived by playing dead.

Harding said people like Chapman who seek execution are using the state to fulfill a death wish.



Quick Trips

Devil's table

Legend gives rock interesting role

BY PETER JAEGER

Stars and Stripes

Once upon a time, the devil traveled through the Pfälzer Wald, the biggest forest in Germany.

In the evening he became tired and hungry but, unfortunately, could not find a place to sit down for dinner. Grabbing two big slices of rock, he created his own table and chair.

After finishing his meal, the devil shouldered the chair to take it along for future rest stops, but he decided to leave the table behind. The locals were shocked when they discovered it the next day — and even to this day people come from miles away to see it.

Parents tell their children when they visit the *Teufelstisch*, or "Devil's Table," a natural monument in the middle of the Pfälzer Wald south of Kaiserslautern.

Created by erosion through millions of years, the table is a big sandstone plate resting on two narrow columns of rock. It weighs 300 tons, and is the most famous rock formation in the Pfälzer Wald.

The Devil's Table is surrounded by deep forests crisscrossed with marked hiking trails. It is a popular destination for those looking for a place to stroll, or to do some climbing. In 1922, the first climber conquered the rock and stood atop the table.

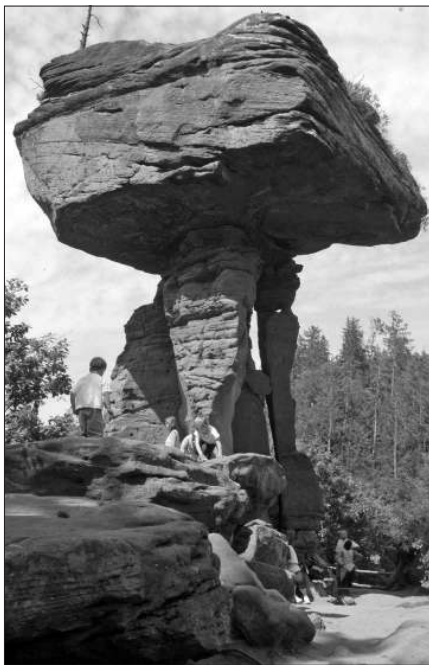
An exciting adventure playground has grown up around the bottom of the hill where the table is located.

It includes long slides that wrap around and over rock formations, a miniature golf course, a place for table tennis and lots of play equipment. The grounds also include picnic areas and grills.

E-mail Peter Jaeger at: jaegerp@mail.strips.osd.mil



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes



PHOTOS BY PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

The Devil's Table is the most famous rock in the Pfälzer Wald, Germany's largest forest. The rock plate weighs 300 tons.



These slides, plus table tennis and mini golf are just a few of the activities available at the playground near Devil's Table. The playground is free.



The public playground near the Devil's Table offers great entertainment for kids and grown-ups.

On the QT



Directions

From Kaiserslautern/Ramstein take Autobahn 6 to Kreuz Landstuhl West onto Autobahn 62, direction Pirmasens. Leave the autobahn at exit 15/Pirmasens and follow Highway 10 to Unterweidenthal. Follow the sign "Teufelstisch" (Devil's Table) for public parking. Marked footpaths lead to the monument — a five-minute walk.

From Heidelberg, take Autobahn 5, direction Basel, switch at Kreuz Walldorf to Autobahn 6, direction Mannheim. At Dreieck Hockenheim take Autobahn 61, direction Cologne (Köln), then get on Autobahn 65 at Kreuz Mutterstadt. Leave Autobahn 65 at exit 15/Landau Nord, and take highway 10, direction Annweiler/Pirmasens, for about 20 miles until Unterweidenthal. Follow signs for the "Teufelstisch."



Times

The playground and surrounding hiking trails are available year round.

While the best time to go is in the summer, the trails are still used during winter months.



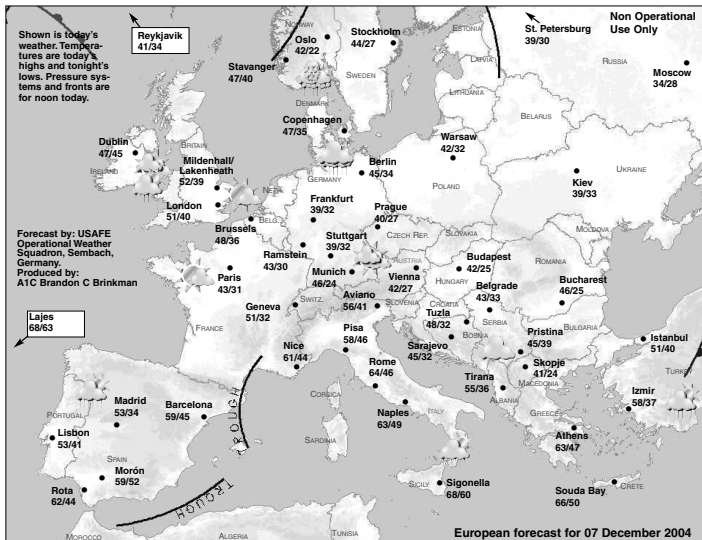
Costs

The Devil's Table and playground are free. Public parking, close to the playground, is 50 euro cents per hour.



Food

Two restaurants next to the playground offer a variety of local German food. *Osw. Landgaststätte Teufelstisch*, is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily; the other, *Gaststätte Am Spielpark*, is open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day except Thursday. Both have free parking.



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Mostly cloudy to Cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s, Wednesday lows in the mid 30s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs in the mid 40s to low 50s, Wednesday lows in the upper 30s to mid 40s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Cloudy with morning fog. Highs in the mid 40s, Wednesday lows in the lower 30s.

France: Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 40s to low 60s, Wednesday lows in the low 30s to mid 40s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain/showers. Highs in the upper 30s to mid 40s, Wednesday lows in the low to mid 30s.

Southern Germany: Mostly cloudy with morning fog. Highs in the upper 30s to mid 40s, Wednesday lows in the mid 20s to low 30s.

Hungary: Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 40s, Wednesday lows in the lower 30s to low 40s.

Northern Italy: Mostly cloudy with morning fog. Highs in the upper 40s to lower 50s, Wednesday lows in the low to mid 40s.

Southern Italy: Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs in the mid 60s, Wednesday lows in the mid 40s to low 60s.

Kosovo: Cloudy with dense morning fog. Highs in the low to mid 40s, Wednesday lows in the mid 20s to upper 30s.

Norway: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain/showers. Highs in the low to mid 40s, Wednesday lows in the lower 30s to lower 40s.

Portugal, Spain: Mostly cloudy with isolated rain/showers. Highs in the low 50s to low 60s, Wednesday lows in the low 30s to low 50s.

Turkey: Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs in the 50s, Wednesday lows in the mid 30s to low 40s.



THE WORLD

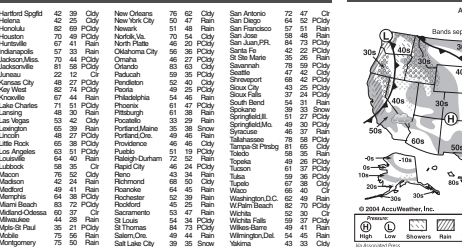
City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO
Amsterdam	49	32	Manila	85	74
Bahrain	79	58	Mexico City	85	74
Beijing	48	28	Montreal	85	74
Bermuda	72	66	Rio de Jan	85	74
Canine	40	20	Sofia	85	74
Helsinki	40	20	Tokyo	85	74
Hong Kong	72	58			
Kyoto	53	41			

City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO
Amsterdam	49	32	Manila	85	74
Bahrain	79	58	Mexico City	85	74
Beijing	48	28	Montreal	85	74
Bermuda	72	66	Rio de Jan	85	74
Canine	40	20	Sofia	85	74
Helsinki	40	20	Tokyo	85	74
Hong Kong	72	58			
Kyoto	53	41			

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO
Albany, Tex.	61	40	Cleveland	50	39
Albany, N.Y.	60	37	Columbus, Ga.	60	39
Albuquerque	62	42	Columbus, Ohio	61	38
Anchorage	60	28	Concord, N.H.	57	37
Annapolis	60	37	Cosmo, Ohio	72	52
Anniston	54	35	Dallas-Ft. Worth	66	40
Asheville	54	35	Dayton Beach	66	40
Astoria	54	35	Dayton, Ohio	66	40
Atlanta	54	35	Des Moines	62	37
Atlantic City	54	35	Detroit	62	37
Baltimore	54	35	Duluth	53	37
Baton Rouge	74	50	El Paso	53	37
Bilings	44	29	Elkins	61	40
Birmingham	69	44	Elizabethtown	69	44
Bismarck	43	37	Evansville	69	44
Boston	43	37	Fairbanks	31	11
Boulder	49	37	Fort Worth	66	40
Brownsville	74	50	Flagstaff	62	37
Buffalo	54	37	Fort Worth	66	40
Burlington, Vt.	36	27	Fort Wayne	66	40
Butte	51	30	Fort Wayne	66	40
Cambridge	59	39	Fort Wayne	66	40
Camper	59	39	Fort Wayne	66	40
Charleston, W.Va.	64	44	Grand Junction	35	25
Charlottesville	69	49	Grand Rapids	47	30
Chattanooga	64	44	Great Falls	45	25
Cheney	44	25	Green Bay	39	23
Chicago	44	25	Greensboro	67	49
Chromet	62	34	Harrisburg	60	40

THE UNITED STATES TODAY



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OPINION

Fallujah campaign gives Iraq vote a chance

BY MAX BOOT

"Nothing except a battle loss can be half as melancholy as a battle won."

—The Duke of Wellington

The news media are taking Wellington's dictum to heart. They seem positively dependent upon the battle of Fallujah.

It is right and proper to mourn the deaths of 71 Americans and the wounding of hundreds more. As Wellington realized, martial glory rings hollow when weighed against the cost in blood. But it is wrong to rush to the opposite extreme by assuming, as so much of the current commentary implicitly does, that war solves nothing and that all casualties are meaningless. In fact, many of the turning points of history have been battles, such as Wellington's victory at Waterloo, which ended for all time the threat of French expansionism in Europe.

Obviously the battle of Fallujah was not as decisive as Waterloo, few battles are. But that shouldn't blind us to the accomplishments of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, which led the offensive along with U.S. Army and Iraqi soldiers.

Coalition troops killed 1,200 to 1,600 guerrillas and captured more than 1,000. They uncovered 26 bomb factories, 350 arms caches (containing thousands of weapons), several chemical weapons laboratories and eight houses where hostages were held and probably tortured and killed. And they accomplished all this with less than half the number of casualties suffered in Hue, Vietnam, in the last major urban assault mounted by the Marine Corps.

As significant as what happened is what didn't happen. The second battle of Fallujah did not turn into a public relations debacle,

as did the attack in April. The Marines cleverly began this campaign by occupying the main hospital in Fallujah, which, in the spring, had been the source of inflated claims about civilian casualties. There was no uprising in the streets of Najaf or Karbala — or Cairo or Amman — to protest the second assault on Fallujah. The Iraqi interim government held together behind the fierce determination of Prime Minister Ayad Alawi to fight the terrorists.

The only major PR snafu came when a journalist taped a Marine shooting a wounded insurgent. Though endlessly replayed on al-Jazeera (which refused to show the video of terrorists apparently slaughtering aid worker Margaret Hassan), there is no sign that this action has cost the United States any public support in Iraq. On the contrary, many Iraqis, fed up with terrorist attacks, no doubt applauded the Marine's ruthlessness.

This is not meant to suggest that everything went perfectly. Many terrorists were able to escape Fallujah before the assault and create mayhem in Mosul, where the local police folded with dismayed speed.

But U.S. and Iraqi forces quickly shifted their focus to the north and snuffed out their uprising in Mosul. Now they are pressing their offensive in the "triangle of death" south of Baghdad.

The best news of recent days is the growing competence of Iraqi security forces. Two thousand Iraqis fought alongside 10,000 Americans in Fallujah and, by all reports, they performed reasonably well. In the operations south of Baghdad, Iraqis are said to outnumber British and American troops.

Skeptics are right to point out that no insurgency can be defeated by force alone, but it is also true that effective military action is usually a prerequisite for a political settlement. Only if the insurgents are convinced



they cannot shoot their way to power will they give up their guns.

The clashes with Muqtada al-Sadr's Al-Mahdi militia this summer proves the point. After being whipped by U.S. forces, the Shiite rabble-rouser decided to join the electoral process. Sadr City, once among the most dangerous areas of Iraq for U.S. troops, has become relatively quiet. The hope now is that the fall of Fallujah will convince more Sunnis of the futility of armed resistance, while elections on Jan. 30 will convince them that their grievances can be addressed through peaceful means.

Even in a best-case scenario, however, the bombings and beheadings won't end the day after the vote. It can take a decade or more to defeat an insurgency (Colombia has been

fighting Marxist guerrillas since 1966), and even a small number of determined fighters can wreak mayhem. In the 1970s, fewer than 100 members of the Baader-Meinhof gang terrorized West Germany, a country that is considerably more populous and more stable than Iraq, which is estimated to have at least 10,000 insurgents.

Thus, for all their success in Fallujah, we should not expect U.S. troops to completely pacify Iraq any time soon. What they can do — what they are doing — is to keep the insurgents from derailing a political process that, one hopes, soon will result in the creation of a legitimate government that can find indigenous security forces and defend itself.

Max Boot is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

New leadership for NAACP can send right message

BY STAR PARKER

The surprise resignation of Kweisi Mfume as president of the NAACP should prompt national leaders to engage in introspection and re-evaluation.

The national leadership has lost its way. It sends a message today to its own community that is, at best, irrelevant and, at worst, destructive. Its agenda, the pure politics of victimization, is a caricature of what the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was originally about.

The heads of local NAACP chapters that I meet are out of step with their national leaders and sound much more like local church pastors.

Pertains because these chapter heads live in close proximity to the troubled communities with which they work, they understand that the problems in black communities today reflect the challenges of the business of living and not the business of politics.

As John McWhorter of the Manhattan Institute has aptly put it, today racism is not the main problem of African-Americans, but rather "the mundane tasks of teaching those 'left behind' after the civil rights 'victory' how to succeed in a complex society."

The NAACP has a proud history at the center of the civil rights movement. But, recall the old saying that everything looks like a nail to a man with a hammer. For years, physical, political and legal barriers stood between blacks and freedom. The NAACP and the civil rights movement were born to tear these barriers down and won historic and glorious victories.

Unfortunately, after the victories of the 1960s, black leadership, typified by the NAACP, transformed a creative struggle for

liberation into the destructive politics of anger and guilt. By turning their energies to building a new welfare state and culture of litigation, these leaders of the 1960s created as many problems as they solved.

On the one hand, there have been undeniable gains in the black community. A new black middle class has emerged in which the percentage of black households with a real gross income above \$75,000 has quadrupled since 1970. The wage gap percentage between black and white workers is half today of what it was in the 1960s. Blacks now hold top-level positions in government and business that would have been inconceivable 40 years ago.

Yet, a large slice of black life is in sad shape and going backward. Over the same period since the 1960s, black illegitimacy

has almost quadrupled, black families headed by single women have tripled, almost half the number of homicides in the country are among black men, half of our new AIDS cases are among black women, many black kids do not make it through school and those who graduate do so with eighth-grade reading skills, and crime and unemployment are rampant in our inner cities.

The shock waves that shook this organization were created by Bill Cosby's remarks at a NAACP gathering earlier this year.

In those well-publicized observations, Cosby shocked the black establishment with truth. He attacked the politics of victimization — the very point of existence today of the NAACP. Cosby began a campaign that night, which he continues today, of formulating a message that will foster a new culture of responsibility in the inner cities.

A number of months ago I was invited to address an annual meeting of a local NAACP chapter in a Midwestern city. The invitation came somewhat reluctantly as result of pressure from a local donor who had made a recent major contribution to the chapter. I delivered my usual message that the answer to poverty does not lie in government but in personal responsibility, ownership and faith. The standing ovation I received told me that I had indeed struck a responsive chord.

As the NAACP leadership looks for a new president, I urge them to stop looking in the rearview mirror and start focusing on the road ahead.

Star Parker is president of Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education and author of the recently published book "Uncle Sam's Plantation."

BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Mallard Fillmore



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AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFRT's web site at <http://myafriatv.com>

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2004

	AFN-FAMILY	AFN-MOVIE	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	AFN-SPORTS	SPECTRUM	AFN-PACIFIC
9:00	Stanley	Movie *** "Killing Mr. Griffin" (1997) Jay Thomas, Mark Lopez. A student plans a teacher's slay.	Dr. Phil	Jocerguy	Nightline	College Basketball Virginia at Iowa State (Taped)	30 Minute Movie "Sweet Dreams"	Jocerguy
9:30	Sagwa-Siamess Cat			Headline News	Army Newswatch		Sweet Dreams	Headline News
10:00	Arthur (E)		(9:45) Oprah Winfrey	ESPNNews	Hardball With Chris Matthews		Striped	ESPNNews
10:30	Between the Lions (E)		(3:35) Guiding Light	Advisory Block			Pacific Report	Pacific Report
11:00	Sagwa-Siamess Cat	(12:45) Movie *** "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" (1936) Comedy Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur, George Bancroft.	(1:17) General Hospital	NFL Football Dallas Cowboys at Seattle Seahawks. From Qwest Field in Seattle.	The O'Reilly Factor	SportsCenter	That '70s Show	NFL Football Dallas Cowboys at Seattle Seahawks. From Qwest Field in Seattle.
11:30	Stanley "Honeyz Problems"		(1:37) General Hospital	Headline News	FOX News	Boxing William Joppy vs. Jeremiah Taylor (Taped)	The King of Queens	Headline News
12:00	Dora the Explorer		Headline News	Judge Judy			Girlfriends "The Wedding"	Headline News
12:30	The Wiggles			Movie *** "What the Deaf Men" (1987) Comedy-Drama James Earl Jones.	Fox and Friends		Charmed "A Witch's Tale"	Headline News
13:00	Bob the Builder			Headline News	Fox and Friends	SportsCenter	Aly McBeal "Aly McBeal: The Musical, Alms"	ESPNNews
13:30	Dragon Tales (E)			Headline News	American Morning	NFL's Greatest Moments	Any Day Now "Too More Forever"	The Tonight Show
14:00	Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	CNN Live Today	NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced (Taped)	ER "Dead Angel"	Headline News
15:00	Funtastic Home Videos	(2:53) Movie *** "Vice Versa" (1988) Comedy John Goodman. A home executive swaps personalities with his son.	Headline News	The Tonight Show			Law & Order "Tribute"	Headline News
15:30	Full House			Headline News	FOX News	SportsCenter	The Simpsons	Headline News
16:00	Pokemon			Headline News			Everybody Loves Raymond	Dennis Miller
16:30	Yo-Gi-Oh			Headline News	FOX News	NFL Football Dallas Cowboys at Seattle Seahawks. From Qwest Field in Seattle.	Star Trek: Enterprise "The Shipment"	Countdown With Keith Olbermann
17:00	AAAH! Real Monsters			Headline News	FOX News		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "One Hit Wonder"	Headline News
17:30	Rocket Power			Headline News	FOX News		Friends (Part 2 of 2)	Headline News
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants			Headline News	FOX News		Seinfeld "The Pothole"	Headline News
18:30	Rugrats			Headline News	FOX News		The Daily Show	Headline News
19:00	The Proud Family			Headline News	FOX News		Blind Date	Headline News
19:30	The Amanda Show			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
20:00	Everwood "Coin the Second"			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
20:30	Sister, Sister			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
21:00	Sister, Sister			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
21:30	The Cosby Show			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
22:00	The Cosby Show			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
22:30	Touched by an Angel "Children of the Night"			Headline News	FOX News			Headline News
23:00				Headline News	FOX News			Headline News

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2004

00:00	Hay Arnold	(11:00) Movie *** "Planet of the Apes" (2001) Tim Roth	(11:45) Late Show	Play With Me Sesame	Headline News	SportsCenter	Late Night	Play With Me Sesame
00:30	Rocket Power (Part 2 of 3)		(11:45) Headline News	Bear in the Big Blue House	NBC Nightly News		Star Trek: Enterprise "The Shipment"	Bear in the Big Blue House
1:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	(12:45) Movie *** "All the Right Moves" (1985) Drama Tom Cruise, Craig T. Nelson.	(12:45) Headline News	Blue's Clues "Geography"	ABC World News Tonight	College Basketball Jimmy V Classic - Memphis vs Pittsburgh. From New York (Live)	Star Trek: Enterprise "The Shipment"	Blue's Clues "Geography"
1:30	Rugrats			Wheel of Fortune	Wheel of Fortune		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "One Hit Wonder"	Wheel of Fortune
2:00	The Proud Family			Dr. Phil	The Newswatch With Jim Lehrer		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "One Hit Wonder"	Dr. Phil
2:30	The Amanda Show			Oprah Winfrey	Hannity & Colmes	College Basketball Jimmy V Classic - Oklahoma State vs. Syracuse. From New York (Live)	Friends (Part 2 of 2)	Oprah Winfrey
3:00	Everwood "Coin the Second"			NBC Nightly News	Headline News		Seinfeld "The Pothole"	NBC Nightly News
3:30	Sister, Sister			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Breathingspace Yoga	Headline News
4:00	Sister, Sister			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Caribbean Workout	Headline News
5:00	Sesame Street (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Body Shopping	Headline News
5:30	Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		TYPICAL Mary Ellen	Headline News
6:00	Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		The View	Headline News
6:30	Dragon Tales (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Buzz Lightyear of Star	Headline News
7:00	Dragon Tales (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Emmer Live	Headline News
7:30	Bob the Builder			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Burt Wolf: Taste of Freedom	Headline News
8:00	The Wiggles			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Food 911	Headline News
8:30	Dora the Explorer			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Sensible Chic	Headline News
9:00	Stanley			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Fashion File	Headline News
9:30	Sagwa-Siamess Cat			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		ET News Live	Headline News
10:00	Arthur (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		The King of Queens	Headline News
10:30	Between the Lions (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Girlfriends "The Wedding"	Headline News
11:00	Sagwa-Siamess Cat			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Charmed "Happy Ever After"	Headline News
11:30	Stanley Stanley loses a race.			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Aly McBeal "Sue, Lies and Second Thoughts"	Headline News
12:00	Dora the Explorer			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Any Day Now "Everyone Deserves to Be Loved"	Headline News
12:30	The Wiggles			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		ER "Insurance"	Headline News
13:00	Bob the Builder			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Law & Order "Monsieur"	Headline News
13:30	Dragon Tales (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		The Simpsons	Headline News
14:00	Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Everybody Loves Raymond	Headline News
15:00	Funtastic Home Videos			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		The Amazing Race	Headline News
15:30	Full House			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Andromeda: A mysterious disease infects the Andromeda.	Headline News
16:00	Pokemon			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Discovery Specials: Natural Wonders (Part 2 of 2)	Headline News
16:30	Yo-Gi-Oh			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Friends (Part 2 of 2)	Headline News
17:00	AAAH! Real Monsters			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		The Daily Show	Headline News
17:30	Rocket Power			Headline News	NBC Nightly News		Blind Date	Headline News
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
18:30	Rugrats			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
19:00	Even Stevens			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
19:30	Kenan & Kel			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
20:00	Gilmore Girls			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
20:30	Home Improvement			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
21:00	Degrassi: The Next Generation			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
21:30	The Cosby Show			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
22:00	Home Improvement			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News
22:30	Touched by an Angel "Jones vs. God"			Headline News	NBC Nightly News			Headline News

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FACES

Starr regrets focus on Lewinsky

Kenneth Starr says he never should have led the investigation that resulted in President Clinton's impeachment.

The former independent counsel, now dean of the Pepperdine University law school, says "the most fundamental thing that could have been done differently" was for somebody else to have investigated Clinton's statements under oath denying he had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Starr said his role in a yearlong investigation of Clinton should have focused instead on Clinton's role in the failed Arkansas land deal known as Whitewater.

"There was a sense on the part of the country that my [Lewinsky] effort was an effort somehow to expand the [Whitewater] investigation, when it was separate," he told the Santa Barbara (Calif.) News-Press following a speech Wednesday.

Nick Nolte named in lawsuit

Parents of a teenage girl have sued Nick Nolte, alleging their daughter was drugged and sexually assaulted at a party at the actor's Malibu, Calif., home two years ago.

The lawsuit, filed Nov. 29 in Superior Court, also lists an employee and several others as defendants. One of the defendants, Nicholas Woodring, was convicted in March of having sex with the girl, then 15 and a minor.

The girl's attorney, Philip Dunn, said Woodring was sentenced to 180 days in jail, but that the case did not go to trial.

"The criminal prosecution is over, and the victim wishes to make sure that nothing like this happens to anyone else again under the same or similar circumstances," Dunn said Thursday.

The district attorney's office could not immediately confirm a criminal conviction for Starr.

"The incident happened nearly two years ago, when Mr. Nolte was not at the property," Nolte's publicist Arnold Robinson said Thursday. "It is our understanding that the individual responsible has been held accountable. Mr. Nolte was at the time, and still remains, concerned for the young lady's well-being."

According to the civil suit, Woodring and a minor gave the girl the date-rap drug GHB and then sexually assaulted her at a Jan. 25, 2003, party.

Dern gives birth to girl

Actress Laura Dern and musician Ben Harper are the parents of a baby girl, a publicist said Friday.

The couple's daughter was born Nov. 28 at Dern's Los Angeles home, said her spokeswoman, Clara Trippichio. A name wasn't released.

"Everyone's healthy and happy," Trippichio said.

The couple also have a son, Ellery Walker, 3, who was born in 2001. Dern, 37, and Harper, 35, are engaged, Trippichio said.

Dern's film credits include "Rambling Rose," "Jurassic Park" and "Wild at Heart."



Dern

Country legend lifts fan's spirits

A gift from country music legend Buck Owens has lifted the mood of one Salem, Ore., woman's spirits.

Betty Youngblood received a huge package this week. It contained a red, white and blue guitar autographed by the 75-year-old Owens, who hosted the TV show "Hee Haw" for many years.

"I guess he wanted to cheer me up," joked Youngblood, a longtime fan of the singer. She met Owens three years ago. Her daughter works for Owens' company.

Owens knew Youngblood had been through several difficult months, including the death of her brother and recent eye surgery.

The guitar is inscribed with the message: "Two easy lessons will qualify you to pick and grin with me. Your friend, Buck Owens."

Owens

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Country duo shakes Nashville



ABACA PRESS/KIT

Big & Rich perform with Two-Foot Fred, left back, and Cowboy Troy, far right, during the 38th annual Country Music Awards at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn. Jon Rich, middle, believes there's a very strong "blue-collar connection" between rap and country, something he and Big Kenny Alphin, far left, wanted to explore on their "hick-hop" tracks.

BY SEAN DALY

The Washington Post

ROANOKE, Va.

A few hours before he's scheduled to shake and shimmy in front of 10,000 fans inside the sold-out Roanoke Civic Center, Two-Foot Fred, the dwarf prince of Nashville, is loose on an all-terrain vehicle in the arena's back parking lot. "The Deuce" — as his bosses affectionately call him — can barely reach the handlebars.

Fred, the cult-inspiring star of the video for country duo Big & Rich's risqué hit "Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy)," steers the four-wheeler past buses and barbecue grills. People wave, flash thumbs-up. Big & Rich's growing gaggle of groupies reach out for him over security barriers.

The Deuce jerks to a stop near a stern-faced leviathan named Cowboy Troy. The 6-foot-4, 250-pound rapper — in black cowboy hat, gaudy belt buckle and bright, tight Superman T-shirt — also plays a major role in Big & Rich's act, unleashing a motor-mouthed rhyme during "Rollin' (The Ballad of Big & Rich)": "You're lookin' at me crazy 'cause you think I'm loose." The Big & Rich Cowboy with the crazy vocal.

"You're gonna see a whole different vibe tonight," says John Rich, 30, a thin, dark-haired man who looks like the quiet dude at the poker table who's about to take all your chips. "It'll sound like an AC/DC concert."

Straight-and-narrow Nashville isn't quite sure what to do with Rich and his partner, Big Kenny Alphin, whose debut album, "Horse of a Different Color," came out of nowhere to push past the hallowed million-sold mark in just three months. Sure, the good-time album has punny honky-tonkers and slick ballads. But there's also the rap-rock of "Rollin'" with its all-inclusive message ("Charley Pride was the man in black/Rock-and-roll used to be about Johnny Cash/Hey, what you think about that?"). A chorus of "Hey ya, hey ya" on "Wild West Show" is an obvious nod to hip-hopsters OutKast. "Save a Horse" has call-and-response moments that remind you of a go-go show. Plus you'll find the kind of silly skits, digi-squiggles and self-referential boasting more akin to a Lucidarts disc. Yep, "Horse of a Different Color" is controlled, country-skewing chaos.

"Show me another country act with a black person in it!" Rich says.

Although they have nothing but nice things to say about country star Tim McGraw — after all, he did give them a slot on his tour — Mr. Faith Hill nevertheless represents the cleansing of country's gritty roots. Big & Rich want to dirty things up again. With a little help from their friends,

they've started a movement called the Muzik Mafia, a tight-knit collection of maverick talents intent on giving Nashville a swift kick in the gitalong. Think Willie Nelson's ruckus-raising Outlaws from the '70s — then add a dwarf.

"Why do you think Two-Foot Fred is so important to what we do?" Rich asks about his friend, who introduces the band as well as dances.

"Big & Rich don't fit any musical genre as far as Fred's concerned. And that's why he likes it so much, 'cause he doesn't fit in anywhere, either. When someone who doesn't feel like he belongs at a country show sees a dwarf onstage, dancing around — well, you can't be any more out of place than that. If he's cool, everybody's cool."

"The Deuce is a badass," says Alphin. "It's him's a superstar."

And with that, Alphin, 40, a tall shaggy blond from Culpeper, Va., takes another gulp of Crown Royal whiskey, the preferred fuel for this nonstop party. There are bottles of the hooch everywhere — on buses, in dressing rooms, even in their songs. Just as 50 Cent talks up Bacardi on "In Da Club," Big & Rich, on "Save a Horse," "buy the bar a double round of Crown and everybody's getting down."

Rich, who grew up in Amarillo, Texas, believes there's a very strong "blue-collar connection" between rap and country, something he and his Big partner wanted to explore on their "hick-hop" tracks.

There's a common thread between hip-hop and country, says Cowboy Troy, who stomps onstage each night for the show-closing "Rollin'," throwing a fist the size of a canned ham into the air and demanding more crowd noise. "It's all about having a good time, drinking whatever you want to drink. Friends and family... Big & Rich are breaking down barriers, cross-pollinating between genres."

Alphin and Rich like to stamp their motto, "Country music without prejudice," on posters, T-shirts, liner notes, wherever. It may sound like a slick gimmick — after all, Kid Rock has merged Southern rock and rap, plus he budded onstage with little person Joe C. — but it comes off as affectionate and genuine. Rich, formerly with the band Lonestar, has been friends with Cowboy Troy Coleman for 11 years and pals with Two-Foot Fred Gil for six. Both sidekicks sleep on Rich's bus.

"We're friends first," says Cowboy Troy, 33, who was an assistant manager at a Foot Locker when he got the call from Rich to come rap on "Rollin'." "My personal loyalty is to John Rich and Big Kenny."

"Somebody else is Big & Rich's position would not be as cool to me," says Fred, 30, who usually prefers a motorized scooter to an all-terrain vehicle. "With me, there's a little more baggage. It's not easy. But they're unbelievable. They don't even blink an eye when it comes to helping me."

King Tut for a price

CA LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles County Museum of Art will present an exhibition of King Tut's treasures in June, but visitors will have to pay as much as \$30 — a record ticket price — to see it.

LACMA is expected to announce that "Tut-an-khamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaoh" will open June 16 and include about 130 Egyptian artifacts, compared with about 55 that toured the country in the 1970s.

The "Tut" ticket prices will be set by the exhibition's backers.

Sea squirts crowd ocean

ME PORTLAND — Invasive sea squirts are multiplying on the Georges Bank ocean bottom, posing potential threats to lucrative seafood species that live on the productive fishing grounds.

Researchers who inspected the area say sea squirt colonies now cover at least 40 square miles, a sixfold increase in the past year. The colonies have created dense slimy mats over gravel and sand on the northern edge of Georges Bank.

The discovery of such a large offshore colony is believed to be unprecedented and is especially troubling because of the history and value of Georges Bank to New England's seafood industry.

Scowling statue to be sold

TX DALLAS — After more than a decade of scowling at Texas burger joint patrons, Vladimir Lenin is on the move again.

The statue of the former Soviet tyrant, purchased for \$500 by the owner of Goff's restaurant in 1992 from a factory in Ukraine, will be listed on the Internet auction site eBay.

Harvey Gough is selling his restaurant near Southern Methodist University, and the 8-foot, 800-pound statue has to go. He's hoping for opening bids of \$3,000.

For Gough, a 33-year Texas National Guard veteran, the statue is a victory souvenir rather than a glorification of Lenin.

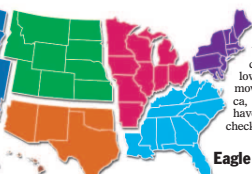
Gough placed a plaque beneath the feet of the founder of Russia's Communist dictatorship in front of the restaurant that said "America won."

Mercury spill conviction

MI DETROIT — A former maintenance worker was convicted and faced up to 15 years in prison for intentionally spilling mercury inside a high school during a union dispute. George Carl Bush, 53, will probably receive between 10 months probation and three years in prison instead, officials said. About 1,400 people inside the school were screened for contamination after the October 2001 spill.

City to pay fired workers

NY NEW YORK — The city has been ordered in federal court to give about \$275,000 in



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

back pay to a police officer and two firefighters who were fired for riding in blackface on a Labor Day parade float in 1998.

Judge John Sprizzo ruled the city must pay Officer Joseph Locuto \$80,000, firefighter Robert Steiner \$77,121, and firefighter Jonathan Walters \$117,804, court records showed.

Former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani blasted the display as a "disgusting display of racism" and publicly declared the three men would be fired.

But last year, Sprizzo ruled that their First Amendment rights were violated when they were fired.

Virus may control ants

FL GAINESVILLE — A U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher has discovered a natural infection that could help bring imported red fire ants under control.

Marking the first time a virus has ever been found in the invasive species, Steven Valles, a Gainesville-based entomologist, said the cold-like virus could provide "an additional control measure" in the ongoing war against the fire ants.

The invasive pest is known for its painful sting. It has been held in check by the prevalence of natural enemies in its native region. In Brazil, fire ant populations, densities



Step right up

Janaina Janin, 2, drinks from a fountain while being propped by her cousin, Isai Rodriguez, 6, and as her sister, Joana, 5, right, turns on the water during an indoor soccer tournament in Spearfish, S.D.

and mound sizes are significantly less than they are in the United States. But because few controls followed the pest when it moved into North America, imported populations have increased nearly unchecked.

Eagle returned to wild

AL MOBILE — A bald eagle seriously injured in a fight with another eagle a year ago has been nursed back to health.

Wildlife scientists planned to release the eagle back into the Mobile Delta. The 14-year-old female eagle, named Pilgrim, was treated at the Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida in Pensacola.

Stun-gun student deported

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma State University student will be deported but won't face legal action for trying to board an airplane with a stun gun. Charges against Marzook Saleh Al-Shammary, a doctoral student from Saudi Arabia, were dismissed in federal court. Court documents say Al-Shammary, 28, won't be allowed back in the United States for 10 years.

Drunken pilot sentenced

PA NORRISTOWN — A drunken pilot who buzzed his single-engine plane near a nuclear power plant and disrupted the flight paths of six airliners was sentenced to six to 23 months in prison.

John V. Salamone had a blood alcohol level of 0.15 percent when he landed after an erratic, four-hour flight on Jan. 15 over the Philadelphia region, authorities said. The legal limit for drivers in Pennsylvania is 0.08 percent.

But Pennsylvania doesn't have laws concerning drunken flying, and drunken driving charges against Salamone were thrown out.

Instead, Salamone was convicted of risking a catastrophe and reckless endangerment.

Salamone, 44, of Pottstown, must also serve five years probation and undergo alcohol counseling, a Montgomery County judge ordered.

Titanic plate for sale

TX DALLAS — A homeless Dallas man is selling a plate from the Titanic on the Internet auction site eBay.

Asking price? Starting at \$49,995.

Jay Sherman's plate, which he inherited from a great-uncle, has been authenticated by a Czech factory. It was made exclusively for the doomed cruise ship Titanic, and may be the only one like it to survive.

Sherman said his great-uncle was a survivor of the great British cruise ship and took the small plate with her.

More than 2,600 people had visited the Web site, but no bids have been posted.



Candles for Kwanzaa Mama Edie Armstrong, left, helps Ashley Scharp, 6, with the lighting of the Kinara during a Kwanzaa celebration at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.



Special sendoff Marine Sgt. Mark Murphy gets a kiss from his daughter, McKay, a first-grader at Green Springs Elementary School in Olathe, Kan. Murphy was at the school for a sendoff party by the students in McKay's class. Murphy will be leaving for Iraq after the first of the year so the students drew pictures and wrote inspirational comments about how proud they are of him.



Parading pandas Tournament of Roses Queen Ashley Moreno applies onion seed to the nose of a panda on a float, titled Playful Pandemonium. The float, celebrating family, will be entered in the Rose Parade on New Year's Day.



Here comes Santa Claus Santa and his helpers make their annual trip down Bayou Little Calou in Chauvin, La., aboard a commercial shrimp vessel.



Cat fancied Judge Rachel Anger of Ann Arbor, Mich., declares Chamseys Pinot Grigio the best kitten at the United Persian Society Cat Show at the Sangamon County Fairgrounds in New Berlin, Ill. The European Burmese was shown by Robin Bryon of Champaign, Ill. The show included about 200 cats.



Helping hand A snowboarder, right, get a lesson from a Perfect Turn ski instructor. In Mount Snow in West Dover, Vt.



Kicking off Christmas The Radio City Rockettes perform during the Boston debut of the Radio City Christmas spectacular at the Wang Theatre.

Bear hunt called off

NJ TRENTON — The state's highest court called off New Jersey's bear hunt four days before the season is scheduled to start.

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the state needs to establish a proper management program for bears before it can allow the animals to be hunted.

More than 300 black bears were killed in last year's hunt — the first bear season in 33 years in New Jersey. Proponents maintain another season is needed because of increasing contact between the animals and humans.

The hunt was authorized in July by the state Fish and Game Council, an independent panel that sets New Jersey's hunting seasons. Nearly 4,000 permits had been issued.

Dog rescued from tire

TX WACO — It took the Jaws of Life and a veterinarian, but Cinnamon the Boston terrier is no longer stuck in a tire.

Wayne Hyde saw his 10-month-old dog's rear quarters sticking in the air, her head plugged into the center rim of a full-size tire.

Trudy Dillingham, Hyde's girlfriend, tried using Vaseline to release the 17-pound dog's head, which seemed bigger than the 4-inch-diameter ring around her neck.

Dillingham called the Belmead Fire Department. Firefighters tried to cut the tire rim with a hand-held metal saw, but they stopped to avoid accidentally hurting the dog.

Then they used their most serious extraction device, a rescue tool called the Jaws of Life, which uses hydraulic power to pry apart or slice open cars when accident victims are stuck.

Briton pleads guilty

CA LOS ANGELES — A 43-year-old man originally from Middlesbrough, England, pleaded guilty Tuesday to trying to extort \$180,000 from a supermarket chain by threatening to put tainted baby food products on store shelves, authorities said.

In exchange for his guilty plea, federal prosecutors agreed to recommend David Dickinson be sentenced to 41 to 51 months in prison. Dickinson had faced a possible 25-year prison term.

A federal grand jury in May handed up an indictment against Dickinson charging him with one count of extortion and one count of tampering with consumer products. Dickinson was living with his family in the Venice area of Los Angeles on an expired visa at the time of the extortion attempt.

Released, then arrested

TX DALLAS — A 76-year-old man was arrested just three months after his release from a Texas prison where he had served more than 40 years on a wrongful conviction.

Robert Carroll Coney of Dallas was released in August after his 1962 Angeleno County robbery conviction was ruled a case of mistaken identity.

Coney had said his identity was confused with a man he carpoled with through Lufkin on the day of the crime.

But federal marshals recently arrested him on a warrant issued in 1976, accusing him of escaping from a Georgia prison. The Dallas Morning News reported he had been serving a 23-year sentence in Georgia for robbery and forging checks.

Coney had spent time behind bars in several states, including Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, and escaped and was recaptured numerous times.

Six dead in crash

FL VERO BEACH — Six people died in a head-on collision on Florida's Turnpike that might have been caused by a blown tire, officials said.

The incident began when the driver of a Toyota heading north lost control of the vehicle, which crossed the median into southbound traffic about 20 miles west of Vero Beach, Florida Highway Patrol Lt. Pat Santangelo said. The car then rammed head-on into a Honda.

The Honda sideswiped another southbound vehicle, causing the third car to cross the median into northbound lanes.

No one in the third vehicle was injured.

All three people in the Toyota died and three of the four people in the Honda died, including a 7-month-old child, Santangelo said.

One woman in the Honda survived with a broken leg, he said.

Donor IDs stolen

PA A Red Cross employee and two other people were accused of stealing the identities of about 40 blood donors and using the information to obtain about \$268,000 in cash and merchandise.

In 2002 and 2003, Red Cross data entry clerk Danielle Baker, 33, of Collingswood, N.J., fished names, addresses, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, telephone numbers and places of employment from the computer records of people who had participated in corporate blood drives in Philadelphia, U.S. Attorney Patrick Meehan said.

Harold J. McCoy III, 33, and Karynn R. Long, 36, of Dayton, Ohio, then used the information to obtain credit using the counterfeit checks and get bank loans, Meehan said.

"The defendants zeroed in on people based on their employment with companies that had a lot of money, knowing it was easier for people with high salaries to obtain credit," he said.

79-year-old arrested

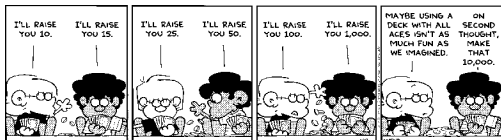
FL FORT LAUDERDALE — A 79-year-old woman was arrested at Fort Lauderdale International Airport when security screeners found an unloaded gun in her carry-on bag, sheriff's officials said.

Margaret Anderson was planning to board a flight on Bahamas Air when an X-ray scanner revealed a small handgun inside the bag, and Broward Sheriff's Office deputies took her and her luggage into custody, sheriff's spokesman Jim Lejelstad said in a news release.

Deputies found a single-shot Colt Derringer in a gun case built to resemble a hardcover book, with seven .22-caliber bullets in the case next to the weapon, the sheriff's office said.

Stories and photos from wire services

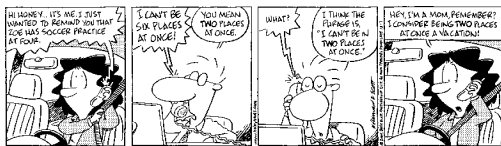
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



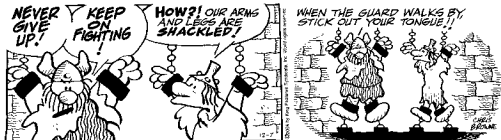
Blondie



Dilbert



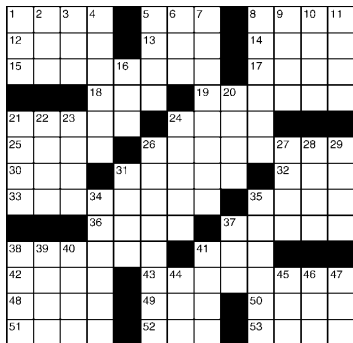
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Champing at the bit
- 5 The Cratchit kid
- 8 Overly theatrical
- 12 Location
- 13 — polloi
- 14 Exam format
- 15 Ex-stars
- 17 Puerto —
- 18 "Little Women" woman
- 19 Smoothed wood
- 21 Spinnaker supports
- 24 Judicious
- 25 Perry's creator
- 26 Get angry
- 30 Afternoon affair
- 31 "M*A*S*H" venue

Down

- 2 Crucial
- 53 Astute
- 1 Tray contents
- 2 By way of
- 3 "— Impossible"
- 4 Engage in forensics
- 5 The folks
- 6 Charged bit
- 7 Letters
- 8 Pupil's cover
- 9 Saharan
- 10 Spiked club
- 11 Trudge
- 16 Pairs of ens
- 20 "... against — of troubles"
- 21 A religion (Abbr.)
- 22 Neighborhood
- 23 Belarusian, e.g.
- 24 Imperfections
- 26 Con
- 27 Butterfly ballot bit
- 28 Seep out slowly
- 29 Small songbird
- 31 Dangling spot
- 34 Proofreader's nightmares
- 35 Rich, patterned fabric
- 37 "Poppycock!"
- 38 Huck's transport
- 39 Modern-day coin
- 40 Pull
- 41 Hinge (on)
- 44 Compete
- 45 Female kangaroo
- 46 Rage
- 47 Sawbuck

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-7

CRYPTOQUIP

AL PNCMKN ZHYFAXX
MK TCOHX NKEONG AL
ZCHYGXKN, POE MFV VECNL

XFXG'E MCHX TYEKN
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I HEAR A GRANDFATHER CLOCK WAS FOUND ATOP A MOUNTAIN PEAK. WELL, IT'S HIGH TIME!
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals D

Inappropriate tip jars prevalent

Dear Abby: When I read the letter from "All Tipped Out," commenting on the increasing number of "tip jars" she encounters in business establishments, I had to write and say I couldn't agree more.

I first noticed the phenomenon about 15 years ago, at a wine-and-cheese fund-raiser for an organization to which I belonged. It was flabbergasted to see that the people pouring the wine had a tip jar on the bar. I assumed that we had hired these people as part of the contract, and certainly never expected to see them blatantly soliciting tips. However, I couldn't convince the event organizers to do anything about it.

Since then, I have seen tip jars on the open bars at weddings. Only once have I seen the father of the bride have the good sense and righteous indignation to order them removed immediately.

There is no reason to tolerate paid help hustling one's invited guests for tips. You wouldn't put up with this at a catered event at your home.

Pat C. Hockessin, Del.

Dear Pat: Good point. Frankly,

I too was surprised at how prevalent the practice has become.

Read on:



Dear Abby

Dear Abby: Please tell "All Tipped Out" to hold onto her hat.

There is a doctor's office in our town—a beautiful facility with lots of employees and patients—that does the same thing, although in a slightly less blatant way.

A friend of mine went to this office to have a procedure done. It was not performed by the doctor, but by a technician. When she went to pay at the reception desk, she was asked if

she would like to "tip" the technician.

I have no problem tipping in establishments where I know the employees are not receiving minimum wage and depend on tips to supplement their incomes. However, I have no doubt that technician was earning more than minimum wage, and I don't think it was appropriate to ask a patient for a tip.

I will be more on my toes than my friend was. I will say, "Perhaps the doctor should give his technician a raise if she needs tips."

—Always a New Twist in Wyoming

Dear New Twist: What you have described seems more like a demand than a request, and it's appalling.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69404, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NAKOE

□ □ □ □ □

UNYTT

□ □ □ □ □

ANTOYB

□ □ □ □ □

SMAFOU

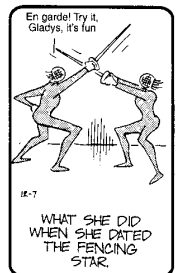
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A: □ □ □ □ □ A "□ □ □ □ □" IT

Yesterday's Jumbles: PEACE ELDER HAZARD GUNNER
Answer: When the elder was hospitalized, his prognosis was —"GUARDED"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argrion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Torn over friend vs. fiancé feud

Dear Annie: My best friend, "Sue," and my fiancé, "Sam," don't get along. Normally, I would not consider this cause for concern.

However, the reason for their rift is what worries me. Sam, who is Jewish, has accused Sue of being anti-Semitic. I have known Sue since kindergarten. Although she has strong religious beliefs, I never have heard her make a prejudicial statement of any kind. I know she does not approve of interfaith relationships, but I thought she supported my choice.

Sam informed me of several anti-Semitic comments that Sue allegedly said to him. When I asked Sue if this was true, she appeared shocked and denied it. She then approached Sam about his accusations in order to straighten out any miscommunication between them.

Now Sam is upset. He thinks our conversations should be private and that I should have taken his word for what hap-

Annie's Mailbox



pened. He thinks I have put Sue before him and has asked me to end my friendship with her.

This is strictly his word against hers. I love Sam and want my marriage to work. He treats me like a princess. But I don't wish to end a lifelong friendship over something I can't prove.

—Need the Wisdom of Solomon

Dear Need Wisdom: Here's our take on it. Because Sue disapproves of interfaith relationships, she most likely said something to Sam that he interpreted as anti-Semitic, since he is doubtless sensitive to such comments.

Our concern is that Sam shows no interest in clarifying the situation or working with you to improve it. His need for you to cut off a longtime friend and accept his word unquestioningly disturbs us and doesn't speak well for his ability to deal with other conflicts that undoubtedly will come up in your marriage. If you haven't had couples counseling,

please look into it.

Dear Annie: One of my closest friends, "Lotte," moved out of state last year. I have visited her twice and recently invited her to visit me. I even offered to pay for her plane ticket. She accepted—and then asked if she could bring her boyfriend with.

I would rather just have Lotte, alone, and told her. Now she is having second thoughts, saying her boyfriend feels hurt that I don't want him here. Should I offer to visit her instead?

—Seattle Friend
Dear Seattle: Lotte was wrong to include her boyfriend in the invitation, and when you said "no," she should have backed down immediately instead of working on your guilt. Tell Lotte you miss her and want the visit to be just the two of you. If she insists on bringing the boyfriend, say sorry, you'll see her another time.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



"I made the team. They all liked my touchdown dance."



Dennis the Menace



"ALL I TOLD HIM WAS THAT HIS BREATH DIDN'T SMELL VERY CHRISTMASY."

The Far Side



"He's using blanks—pass it on."



Non Sequitur



"SO WHEN ARE YOUR PLANS FOR RESISTANCE PUT TO THE OPERATION GOING, DEAR?"

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AFN-TV & Radio

AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m.—Bowling: Paula Denver open (did).

AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.—NFL: Dallas at Seattle (did).

AFN-Sports, 4 a.m.—Golf: People vs. Pro (Special did).

AFN-Sports, 9:30 a.m.—College basketball: Virginia at Iowa (S did).

AFN-Sports, 11 a.m.—J.J. Lelands at Seattle (did).

AFN-Sports, 3:30 p.m.—NBA: Miami at Utah (did).

AFN-Sports, 7 p.m.—NFL: Dallas at Seattle (did).

Wednesday

AFN-Atlanta, 1 a.m.—NBA: Milwaukee at Atlanta (did).

AFN-Sports, 1 a.m.—College basketball: Oklahoma at Pittsburgh (did).

AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.—College basketball: Oklahoma at Pittsburgh (did).

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—NBA: New Orleans at Houston (did).

AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m.—NBA: Charlotte at Atlanta (did).

AFN-Sports, 4 p.m.—Rodeo: National Finals (did).

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College basketball

AP Men's Top 20

1. Wake Forest (5-1) lost to No. 10 Illinois 91-73; beat Richmond 90-63.

2. Kansas (10-0) beat Iowa 85-52; beat Pacific 81-50.

3. Connecticut (7-0) beat St. Bonaventure 91-67; beat Colgate 68-55.

4. Michigan State (1-0) beat Michigan 99-67; beat Georgia 67-48.

5. Oklahoma State (1-1) lost to No. 1 Wake Forest 91-73; beat Arkansas 75-50.

6. Alabama (1-0) beat Southern Methodist 76-57; beat Washington State 81-59.

7. Connecticut (3-0) beat Florida International 80-60; beat Indiana 81-60.

8. Kentucky (4-1) beat Tennessee Tech 82-60; lost to No. 9 Duke 81-60.

9. North Carolina (5-1) beat Florida 70-63; beat Kentucky 91-73.

10. Duke (5-0) beat No. 11 Michigan State 81-60; beat Wake Forest 81-60.

11. Michigan State (4-2) lost to No. 10 Duke 81-60; beat Georgia Tech 99-60; beat Georgia Mason 66-50.

12. Maryland (4-2) lost to No. 20 Wisconsin 69-64; beat Boston Marquette 78-54; lost to Wisconsin 69-64.

13. Washington (5-0) beat St. Francis, Pa. 62-40; beat Duquesne 81-60.

14. Pittsburgh (5-1) lost to Gonzaga 91-67; beat Duquesne 81-60.

15. Mississippi State (5-2) beat South Alabama 66-52; lost to No. 21 Arizona 64-54.

16. North Carolina State (6-0) beat Purdue 60-40; beat Wake Forest 81-60.

17. Louisville (4-1) beat Lafayette 98-57.

18. Texas (5-1) beat Coppin State 86-59; beat North Carolina 70-62.

19. Washington (5-0) beat Florida A&M 88-51; beat North Carolina 70-62.

20. Miami Dante (3-1) lost to Michigan 91-73.

21. Alabama (5-2) beat Wake Forest 97-60; lost to No. 15 Mississippi State 81-60.

22. Alabama (5-2) beat Georgia Tech 81-60; State 114-77; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

23. Virginia (6-1) beat Drake 91-75; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

24. Alabama (5-2) beat North Carolina 70-62; beat Auburn 87-60.

25. North Carolina (4-1) beat No. 12 Maryland 69-64; beat Rutgers 70-62.

26. Alabama (5-2) beat Wake Forest 97-60; lost to No. 15 Mississippi State 81-60.

27. Alabama (5-2) beat Georgia Tech 81-60; State 114-77; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

28. Virginia (6-1) beat Drake 91-75; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

29. Alabama (5-2) beat North Carolina 70-62; beat Auburn 87-60.

TOURNAMENT
Final Classic
George Washington 101, Maryland 92
Michigan 57, George Mason 50

AP Women's Top 25

1. LSU (9-0) beat North Texas 77-51.

2. North Carolina (5-1) beat Wake Forest 69-51; beat Tennessee Tech 75-50; lost to Penn State 77-51.

3. Notre Dame (7-1) beat Valparaiso 69-59; lost to No. 15 Michigan State 82-72.

4. Tennessee (1-1) beat East Carolina 80-59; lost to No. 16 Duke 59-57.

5. Stanford (5-0) did not play.

6. Georgia (5-2) beat Georgia Southern 69-51; lost to Georgia Tech 75-50.

7. Texas (4-2) beat McNeese State 80-26; beat New Mexico 72-50.

8. Connecticut (3-1) beat South Florida 75-50; lost to Wake Forest 75-50.

9. Baylor (3-1) beat Rice 77-55; beat Jackson South 75-50; beat East Carolina 80-59.

10. Duke (7-1) beat No. 4 Tennessee 59-57; beat Wake Forest 75-50.

11. Ohio State (7-1) beat Ohio 107-59; beat Dayton 75-50.

12. Texas Tech (2-1) beat Arkansas-Little Rock 75-50.

13. Vanderbilt (6-0) beat Memphis 96-53; beat Miami (Ohio) 50-26.

14. Purdue (4-2) lost to Houston 63-59; lost to Michigan State 75-50.

15. UCLA (7-0) beat Michigan State 75-50.

16. Michigan State (6-0) beat No. 3 Notre Dame 77-50; lost to Cincinnati 77-51.

17. Rutgers (1-1) lost to Old Dominion 69-61.

18. DePaul (5-0) beat Illinois-Chicago 97-54.

19. Minnesota (6-0) beat Detroit 86-54.

20. Kansas (4-2) beat Wake Forest 69-51; beat North Carolina 70-63.

21. Boston College (5-1) beat Holy Cross 69-61; beat Northeastern 90-53.

22. Virginia Tech (5-2) lost to Mississippi State 73-55; beat Western Kentucky 77-50.

23. Louisville (7-0) beat No. 10 Duke 81-60.

24. Maryland (4-2) beat Loyola, Md. 77-50; beat Virginia Tech 75-50.

25. UCLA (5-1) beat Pepperdine 74-51; beat North Carolina 70-63.

26. North Carolina (4-1) beat Wake Forest 97-60; lost to No. 10 Illinois 91-73.

27. Connecticut (7-0) beat Pacific 81-50.

28. Kentucky (4-1) beat Tennessee Tech 82-60; lost to No. 9 Duke 81-60.

29. North Carolina (5-1) beat Florida 70-63; beat Kentucky 91-73.

30. Duke (5-0) beat No. 11 Michigan State 81-60; beat Wake Forest 81-60.

31. Michigan State (4-2) lost to No. 10 Duke 81-60; beat Georgia Tech 99-60; beat Georgia Mason 66-50.

32. Maryland (4-2) lost to No. 20 Wisconsin 69-64; beat Boston Marquette 78-54; lost to Wisconsin 69-64.

33. Washington (5-0) beat St. Francis, Pa. 62-40; beat Duquesne 81-60.

34. Pittsburgh (5-1) lost to Gonzaga 91-67; beat Duquesne 81-60.

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37. Louisville (4-1) beat Lafayette 98-57.

38. Texas (5-1) beat Coppin State 86-59; beat North Carolina 70-62.

39. Washington (5-0) beat Florida A&M 88-51; beat North Carolina 70-62.

40. Miami Dante (3-1) lost to Michigan 91-73.

41. Alabama (5-2) beat Wake Forest 97-60; lost to No. 15 Mississippi State 81-60.

42. Alabama (5-2) beat Georgia Tech 81-60; State 114-77; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

43. Virginia (6-1) beat Drake 91-75; beat Chattanooga 102-107.

44. Alabama (5-2) beat North Carolina 70-62; beat Auburn 87-60.

UC Santa Barbara, Oregon St. 71
Loyola, Purdue 64

Brown Classic

Salmon, Va.
Brown 69, Lehigh 61

Third Place

Bowling Green 74, Winthrop 52

Fourth Place

California 65, Tennessee Tech 41

Fifth Place

Pepperdine 63, North Carolina 52

Sixth Place

Arizona 80, Weber St. 53

Seventh Place

Delaware 69, UNC-Greensboro 59

Eighth Place

Baylor 80, St. Francis 52

Ninth Place

Stephen F Austin 61, Jacksonville St. 49

Tenth Place

Mount Holyoke 50, Swarthmore 44

Eleventh Place

Smith St. 50, Haverford 32

Twelfth Place

St. Joseph Conn. 54, Bryn Mawr 39

Thirteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Fourteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Fifteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Sixteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Seventeenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Eighteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Nineteenth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twentieth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-first Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-second Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-third Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-fourth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-fifth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-sixth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-seventh Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-eighth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Twenty-ninth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Thirtieth Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Thirty-first Place

St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Championship
Saturday, Dec. 18
St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Semifinal winners

NAIA playoffs
Semifinals
St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Championship

Saturday, Dec. 18
St. Francis Ind. 13-0 vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Semifinal winners

Baseball
Free agent signings

NEW YORK (7) — The 27 free agents who have signed, with name, position, former club if different, and contract. The contract information was obtained by The Associated Press from player and management sources.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BOSTON (1) — Re-signed Doug Mireault, C, to a 3 million, two-year contract.

CLEVELAND (1) — Re-signed Bob Wickman, P, to a \$4.75 million, one-year contract.

DETROIT (1) — Signed Troy Percival, RHP, to a \$12 million, two-year contract.

MINNESOTA (2) — Signed Juan Castro, 3B, to a \$2 million, two-year contract.

ST. LOUIS (1) — Re-signed John Flaherty, RHP, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

TEXAS (1) — Signed Jason Ligon, C, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

CHICAGO (1) — Signed Jason Ligon, C, to a minor league contract (\$700,000).

CHICAGO (1) — Re-signed Geronimo Wilson, P, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

CINCINNATI (1) — Re-signed Paul Wilson, P, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

FLORIDA (1) — Re-signed Daniel Escobar, P, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

HOUSTON (1) — Re-signed Jose Vizcaino, P, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

MILWAUKEE (1) — Signed Daniel Miller, C, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

MINNESOTA (1) — Signed Cristian Guzman, SS, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

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Halania, Phil Martinez, 1B; Todd Ritchie, 2B; Tim Lincecum, 3B; Ryan Howard, 1B; David Ortiz, 1B; Alex Rodriguez, 3B; J. J. Lelands, 1B; Ryan Howard, 1B; David Ortiz, 1B; Alex Rodriguez, 3B; J. J. Lelands, 1B; Ryan Howard, 1B; David Ortiz, 1B; Alex Rodriguez, 3B; J. J. Lelands, 1B; Ryan Howard, 1B; David Ortiz

Don't bet on MLB to punish Bonds, Giambi

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Don't expect Major League Baseball to discipline Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield over reported admissions of steroid use.

Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig is more concerned about pressuring players to agree to more testing before the current labor contract expires in December 2006.

Analysis

Already convinced in the court of public opinion, the players who testified before a federal grand jury are protected from discipline because steroids weren't banned by Major League Baseball until Sept. 30, 2002, previously undetectable THG wasn't prohibited until last March, and Human Growth Hormone still isn't blacklisted.

And while baseball's labor contract calls for penalties for positive tests and criminal convictions, there's no discipline specified for fessing up to steroid use.

"These articles say baseball is reacting from these allegations," New York Mets pitcher Tom Glavine, a players' association leader, said Sunday. "To me, there is nothing new. People have been talking about the steroid issue for several years now. What's coming out of the grand jury testimony, I don't think there's anything surprising. Yes, it's a big story. It absolutely needs to be addressed. But it shouldn't be surprising or earth-shattering to anybody."

Dozens of major leaguers were in Phoenix on Monday for the start of the union's annual executive committee meeting.

"Obviously, the steroids issue is something that was going to come up in our board meeting," union head Donald Fehr said. "That would have been the case quite apart from this."

Gene Orza, the union's chief operating officer, and Rob Manfred, executive vice president in charge of relations with the commissioner's office, said several times since May a discussion of Selig's call for more frequent testing and harsher penalties.

Top lawmakers support McCain's call for crackdown on steroids in baseball

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Major League Baseball should enforce stronger rules against steroid abuse by players on its own, but Congress will require changes by law if necessary, leading lawmakers said Sunday.

Sen. John McCain, the driving force behind changing how baseball polices performance-enhancing drug use, said Sunday he believes President Bush would sign a bill into law.

"There's not a doubt in my mind. He'd love to," said McCain, who accompanied Bush to Saturday's Army-Navy college football game in Philadelphia.

He added that Bush, too, would prefer for baseball to act on its own. "I know that the president would like to see it done through collective bargaining, legislation made by owners and labor," said McCain, R-Ariz.

Other lawmakers, including the top Republican in the Senate and the House's top Democrat, expressed similar sentiments as cries grew louder for baseball to act.

The matter has become urgent since the San Francisco Chronicle reported last week details of players' testimony to a federal grand jury that indicted four people

Publicly, the union has shown a willingness to discuss changes, not to make them.

"We've had ongoing discussions with the union," Manfred said.

"We feel a great sense of urgency to complete the discussions, and we hope the union has the same sense."

Because steroid use wasn't banned until two years ago, it's inconceivable baseball would denote in its record book that Bonds might have used performance-enhancing

drugs on charges of illegally distributing steroids to top athletes.

One of those indicted was the personal trainer of the San Francisco Giants' Barry Bonds, whose 73 home runs in 2001 is the game's single-season record and who is 53 homes away from breaking Hank Aaron's all-time record of 755. Bonds told the grand jury he used a cream and a clear substance but said he didn't know they were forbidden substances.

"The important aspect of this issue is not Barry Bonds" or other big names, McCain, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, said on "Fox News Sunday."

"The important aspect of this issue is that high school kids all over America believe that this is the only way they can make it out of high school coach."

"They have a responsibility, not only to the sport, but to the children of America who look up to these players," Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said on "Fox News Sunday." "Quite frankly, it's overdue."

Sen. Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said the problem "could be ended, bang, just like that, if everybody from the owners to the unions just step up and face the reality that we've got a huge problem."

drugs when he set the season home run record of 73 in 2001. And whether any revelations damage his chances to make the Hall of Fame will be determined only when the eligible baseball writers who vote make up their minds in several years.

Testing with penalties for steroid use began only this year, with each player tested once between the start of spring training and the end of the regular season. A penalty for a first positive test is counseling, and a second positive test could result

only in a 15-day suspension. It would take five positive tests before Selig could ban a player for a year.

Even if a player is convicted for the use of a prohibited substance, baseball's labor contract allows a suspension of only 15 to 30 days for first-time offenders.

Critics say year-round testing is needed, along with stiffer penalties. U.S. Sen. John McCain threatened to introduce legislation to override baseball's union contract. Even if enacted, there's a good chance his idea would be thrown out in court as contrary to federal labor law.

"It sounds great, or it sounds tough," Glavine said. "I'm not even sure if that can be done. I'm sure it was designed to be, 'Oh my God, we had to do something.'"

In any event, baseball lawyers said news reports of grand jury testimony aren't sufficient to discipline players; baseball itself would have to have the actual sealed statements.

Giambi's problems with the New York Yankees are the result of his increased injuries and diminished output. The team is examining whether it can use the language in his contract to escape the remaining \$82 million he is owed for what appears to be reasons of financial flexibility — not necessarily because the team is upset about steroid use.

No major league ever has been suspended for steroids.

"The only thing that's come out of the grand jury is Jason Giambi admitted to it, but nobody's surprised by it," Glavine said. "In Barry's case, the cloud remains as to whether he knew he was doing it or didn't. It kind of puts it back on the front page and it becomes a hot-button issue that everybody is talking about."

"People forget that in terms of this agreement, it's only been in place a short period of time and the first period was just a testing phase. We've really been through only one year of mandatory testing. I think the program we had last year had some effect on guys. Did it go far enough and what steps can be taken to totally eliminate the use of any of this steroid testing. I think fans to play? We'll continue to tweak and look at it."

Singh ends dominant season as PGA's player of the year

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Vijay Singh won the PGA Tour player of the year award Monday for the first time, ending Tiger Woods' five-year hold on the honor with a season that left no debate about who was No. 1 in golf.

Singh, 39, captured the PGA Championship among his nine victories and became the first player to surpass \$10 million in one season. No one else won more than three times, and his earnings were nearly twice as much as Ernie Els'.

Singh earlier won the PGA of America player of the year, which is determined by points. He also captured his first Vardon Trophy for having the lowest scoring average, and his second straight money title.

The PGA Tour award is determined by a vote of the players. Singh, thought to have been handed won it last year, when he won four times and was No. 1 on the money list. Woods, who had five victories last year, won the award by a close margin.

That motivated Singh to work harder than ever, and it paid off beyond his wildest dreams.

"My thought this year was to play hard and play good the whole season," Singh said. "That was a fulfilling thing. I didn't have to wait for the votes."

The tour does not release the votes.

British Open champion Todd Hamilton was voted PGA Tour rookie of the year. John Daly, whose victory at the Buick Invitational was his first on U.S. soil in 10 years, was voted PGA Tour comeback player of the year.

Craig Stadler was Champions Tour player of the year, while Mike McQuay was the Champions rookie of the year, and Hubert Green was the comeback player of the year after returning from cancer.

Jimmy Walker was Nationwide Tour player of the year.

NBA declines to stop union's brawl grievance hearing

NEW YORK — The NBA informed the players' union Sunday it will not seek a temporary restraining order in federal court, clearing the way for a grievance hearing over suspensions for the Pacers-Pistons brawl.

Arbitrator Roger Kaplan will

Sports briefs

prelude over the hearing Thursday and Friday at a Manhattan law office. Suspend players Ron Artest, Jermaine O'Neal and Stephen Jackson are expected to attend. Artest was sidelined for the season, Jackson for 30 games, and O'Neal for 25 for fighting with fans Nov. 19.

The NBA has already filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court challenging Kaplan's authority to hear the grievance, and the league was expected to try Monday to prevent the hearing from going forward.

More drug tests coming to track and field

HELSINKI, Finland — Track and field's governing body will increase testing and funding in an attempt to stem the use of performance-enhancing substances.

The International Association of Athletics Federations also said Sunday it will work more closely with the World Anti-Doping Agency.

"New demands will have to be met," said Amy Ljungqvist, head of the IAAF's doping commission. "We will allocate more resources, more manpower and more expertise."

He said no decisions have been made yet on how much money will be spent.

Notre Dame tops UCLA for NCAA women's soccer title

CARY, N.C. — Notre Dame won its second NCAA women's soccer championship by beating UCLA 4-3 on penalty kicks after the teams tied 1-1 through 110 minutes of regulation and overtime Sunday.

The Fighting Irish (24-1-1) also won the national title in 1995 and joined North Carolina as the only multiple champions.

Jill Kravack made the deciding kick in the first NCAA women's soccer title game decided by penalties. The game ended when goalkeeper Jennifer Enns turned Lindsay Greco's shot wide on the next attempt.

UCLA (18-6) led 1-0 in the 60th minute on Gudrun Gunnarsdottir's goal. Notre Dame's goal came on Katie Thorlakson's penalty kick in the 74th.

Miller seeks edge over course again

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Benjamin Raich of Austria held off teammate Rainer Schoenfelder and Giorgio Rocca of Italy on Sunday to win the first slalom of the World Cup season, while overall leader Bode Miller skied over for a second straight race.

Miller won four of the season's first five races in his bid to become the first U.S. man to win the overall World Cup title since Phil Mahre in 1983.

Overall World Cup slalom ski tip down the first run Sunday and went off course. On Saturday, he crashed in his first run of a giant slalom.

Austrians dominate Super-G

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta — Michaela Dorfmeister of Austria cut through falling snow to win the Super-G. Her teammate, Austria's super giant slalom of the season Sunday.

Dorfmeister finished in 1 minute, 16.24 seconds. Teammate Renate Gotschell was second in 1:16.39, followed by Lindsey Kilford of the United States in 1:16.64.

Bears voice frustration on spoiled holiday

BY GREG BEACHAM

The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — California refused to run up the score or beg for poll votes.

Maybe the Bears should have. Cal (10-1) was left out of the Bowl Championship Series, denied one of the eight spots in college football's big-money games despite a season of statistical superlatives and dominating victories.

The fourth-ranked Golden Bears will be stuck playing Texas Tech in the Holiday Bowl while Texas plays in the Rose Bowl.

Cal's Rose Bowl drought reached 46 years despite one of the best regular seasons in school history.

The Bears felt beaten as they left their team meeting.

Quarterback Aaron Rodgers saw confusion and disappointment in his teammates when they found out their Rose Bowl dreams were reality with a trip to San Diego to face Texas Tech.

"It just shows it's a faulty system, we've got to do something to change it,"

Rodgers said. "I bet Auburn is pretty ticked, too. ... Nobody cares about West Coast football. I don't think I just hope Southern Cal represents us well."

Texas (10-1) surged past the Bears in the final BCS standings despite Cal's 26-16 road victory over Northern Mississippi on Saturday night. The Longhorns gained points in both polls, and the computer rankings kept Texas well in front of Cal. The Longhorns will face Michigan (9-2) on Jan. 1.

There were dozens of factors in the decision, but the Bears felt they were superior in almost every venue — except the political one. Rodgers figured Texas coach Mack Brown's pleading for poll support made a difference, and he was glad Cal coach Jeff Tedford never did likewise.

"I thought it was a little classless how Coach Brown was begging for votes after the [Texas A&M] game," Rodgers said. "I think a team's record and the way they play

should speak for itself, and you shouldn't have to complain about the BCS system. Coach Tedford isn't going to, although he's frustrated just like we are. I think we're a bigger team, classier than that."

Tedford was less emotional than Rodgers, but he was not disappointed as he evaluated the Bears' long list of accomplishments.

The only blemish on their record was a six-point loss at top-ranked USC. They beat 10 teams by an average of 23.9 points per game. They were the only school in the nation's top six both in scoring offense and scoring defense.

The Rose Bowl was matched a Big 10 team against a Pac-10 school for decades, and with the Pac-10 champion Trojans headed to the Orange Bowl, Cal hoped to end the conference's longest Rose Bowl drought. Instead, there will be burnt orange in the Pasadena stands.

"I just feel terrible for the alumni and

the fans who have waited so long for this," Tedford said. "As a program, we were set on the Rose Bowl. I felt like we did enough to earn that."

Most of the Bears still were jet-lagged and exhausted after grinding out a victory in Hattiesburg, Miss., just 18 hours earlier in a game postponed from Sept. 16 by Hurricane Ivan. The late-season road trip provided a national television audience — but when the Golden Eagles were difficult to put away, it might have swayed some voters away.

And that was baffling to Tedford, who refused to try to score one last touchdown in the waning seconds to pad the score. The Bears also were hurt by a questionable clipping call in the closing minutes, which negated a touchdown run by J.J. Arrington.

Usually, Tedford wouldn't pass a second's thought on such issues, but in the BCS world, it might have made a difference.

"If yesterday's game was the game that turned anybody's head, then that's a bad, because it's thought on such issues," Tedford said. "We're going to keep our same philosophy. It's hard enough just to win games."

BCS: System didn't account for third unbeaten team

BCS, FROM BACK PAGE

Last season, USC was the odd team out.

The Trojans were left out of the BCS title game, despite being No. 1 in both the AP and coaches polls at the end of the regular season. Instead, Oklahoma played LSU in the Sugar Bowl, even though the Sooners lost the Big 12 title game.

When all the bowls were finished, LSU won the BCS championship and USC was No. 1 in the final AP poll.

"We certainly understand what it feels like when you wished you'd been in this game," said USC coach Pete Carroll, sympathizing with Auburn's plight. "Unfortunately, there were three undefeated teams and with this system one of them was going to be left out."

In an attempt to avoid a repeat of 2003's mess, the BCS scaled back its formula, making it far more reliant on the human polls.

But another problem arose, of course: For the first time since the BCS was implemented in 1998, there were more than two unbeaten teams from major conferences.

"The bottom line is whatever formula we have is going to be the target of some significant criticism at the end of the day," BCS coordinator and 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg said.

It worked great for Utah (11-0), which officially became the first team from a non-BCS conference to receive a bid to one of the four \$14 million bowl games, earning a spot in the Fiesta Bowl against Big East representative Pittsburgh (8-3).

The Utes, from the Mountain West Conference, will play their last game under coach Urban Meyer on Jan. 1 in Tempe, Ariz. Meyer is headed to Florida.

USC and Oklahoma headed to Orange Bowl

Southern California and Oklahoma finished atop the final Bowl Championship Series standings Sunday and will meet in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 4 in a title game that might not produce a unanimous national champion.

TEAM	Associated Press				USA Today/ESPN				Computers				BCS Average	Previous
	Rank	Points	Pct.		Rank	Points	Pct.		Avg. Comp.	Rank	Points	Pct.		
1. Southern Cal	1	1,599	.9840		1	1,409	.9770		2	97	970	.9770	1	
2. Oklahoma	2	1,556	.9575		2	1,459	.9560		1	99	990	.9681	2	
3. Auburn	3	1,525	.9365		3	1,435	.9410		3	92	920	.9331	3	
4. Texas	4	1,337	.8920		5	1,281	.8400		4	88	880	.8476	5	
5. California	4	1,339	.8609		4	1,286	.8433		6	80	800	.8347	4	
6. Utah	5	1,345	.8227		6	1,215	.7967		5	83	830	.8181	6	
7. Georgia	8	1,117	.8674		7	1,117	.7325		8	67	670	.6966	7	
8. Virginia Tech	9	1,111	.8637		9	1,037	.8600		19	65	650	.6712	12	
9. Boise State	10	960	.5908		10	943	.8184		7	76	760	.6564	8	
10. Louisville	7	1,183	.7280		8	1,066	.8990		13	52	520	.6490	9	
11. LSU	12	929	.5717		11	932	.6111		19	65	650	.6109	11	
12. Iowa	11	948	.5834		13	812	.5325		12	55	550	.5553	13	
13. Michigan	13	917	.5643		12	874	.5731		17	38	380	.4508	14	
14. Miami (Fla.)	14	776	.4775		14	738	.4839		114	45	450	.4705	10	
15. Tennessee	15	651	.4006		17	559	.3666		114	45	450	.4057	15	
16. Florida State	17	647	.3982		15	643	.4216		21	22	220	.3466	16	
17. Wisconsin	16	648	.3988		16	599	.3928		20	24	240	.3439	17	
18. Virginia	18	482	.2966		18	455	.2984		18	30	300	.2983	18	
19. Arizona State	21	222	.1368		24	173	.1134		11	56	560	.2700	19	
20. Texas A&M	22	213	.1311		25	147	.0964		16	44	440	.2225	20	
21. Pittsburgh	19	415	.2554		20	318	.2085		NR	0	000	.1548	21	
22. Texas Tech	23	168	.1034		21	234	.1354		22	19	190	.1489	21	
23. Florida	20	325	.2000		19	324	.2125		NR	0	000	.1375	22	
24. Oklahoma State	32	16	.0098		28	35	.0230		19	25	250	.0943	24	
25. Ohio State	24	155	.0954		22	181	.1187		NR	4	040	.0847	25	

Explanation

Team percentages are derived by dividing a team's actual voting points by a maximum 1,625 possible points in the AP Poll and 1,525 possible points in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches Poll.

Six computer rankings calculated in inverse points order (25 for #1, 24 for #2, etc.) are used to determine the overall computer component. The best and worst ranking for each team is dropped, and the remaining four are added and divided by 100 (the maximum possible points) to produce a Computer Rankings Percentage. The six computer ranking providers are Anderson & Hestler, Richard Billingsley, Colley Matrix, Kenneth Massey, Jeff Sagarin and Peter Wolfe. Each computer ranking accounts for schedule strength in its formula.

The BCS Average is calculated by averaging the percent totals of the Associated Press, USA Today/ESPN Coaches and Computer polls.

SOURCE: The National Football Board and College Hall of Fame Inc., BCS.

ings for all but the first week, when Miami was No. 2 and Oklahoma third.

Auburn worked its way up both

the polls and the BCS. The Tigers shared No. 25 with the Sooners in the AP Top 25 for one week but could never get past the Sooners.

So Sunday's Orange Bowl announcement was not surprising after Auburn, Oklahoma and USC all finished their regular seasons

with victories Saturday. Texas' move past Cal might have caught some people off guard, however.

It looked as if the Bears controlled their BCS destiny a few weeks ago and simply needed to win out to reach the Rose Bowl for the first time since 1959. But Texas began gaining ground in the polls, especially among the coaches, as Longhorns coach Mack Brown lobbied for votes.

Texas' first BCS bid also means the Rose Bowl won't have its traditional Big Ten vs. Pac-10 matchup.

As for the Orange Bowl, it's Oklahoma, the team that most people thought shouldn't have been in championship game last year, against USC, the team that most people thought should have been there instead.

"No question you have just a better feeling going into it," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. "It sure is a lot easier. Those wins give you a lot of energy and a boost."

The Sooners and Trojans bring a combined 11 AP national titles into the game.

Oklahoma's seventh and last national title came in 2000 and was wrapped up with an Orange Bowl victory over Florida State.

The Sooners and Trojans also have four of the leading Heisman Trophy contenders — two on each side.

Oklahoma quarterback Jason White is making a run at becoming just the second two-time Heisman winner. While tailback Adrian Peterson has a chance to become the first freshman to win the award.

USC quarterback Matt Leinart has pushed numbers equal to White, and versatile scatback Reggie Bush might be the most exciting and dangerous player in the country.

"It's going to be a nightmare for the defensive coaches," Carroll said. "I think it's a perfect matchup."



Texas' rise in BCS puts A&M in contention

BY JAMIE ARON
The Associated Press

DALLAS — Texas A&M's great turnaround season continued Sunday as the Aggies earned a spot in the Cotton Bowl against Tennessee.

And the Aggies have their top rival, Texas, to thank for it. The Longhorns would've been headed to Dallas on New Year's Day had they been left out of the Bowl Championship Series. But Texans nudged ahead of California in the final BCS standings, earning an at-large bid to the Rose Bowl and opening the Big 12 slot in this game for No. 22 Texas A&M.

Minnesota was relegated to the Holiday Bowl, where it will take on another Big 12 team, Texas Tech, on Dec. 30.

The way we look at it, the Big 12 conference offered the opportunity for Texas to get into a BCS game," Aggie coach Dennis Franchione said. "I certainly created an opportunity for us to come to Dallas, which we're very, very excited about."

The Aggies already were thrilled to know they'd be playing in any bowl for the first time since 2001. They earned it by going 7-4, with three of the losses to teams now ranked in the top six of No. 2 Oklahoma, No. 5 Utah, No. 6 Texas. Their success is even more remarkable considering they were 4-8 last season, their first under Franchione.

The No. 15 Volunteers (9-3) knew they were headed to the Cotton Bowl for the second time in five years after losing 38-20 to Auburn in the SEC championship game Saturday night.

"We're just really pleased that they [bowl officials] felt good about bringing the University of Tennessee back," coach Phillip Fulmer said.

In other bowl games, Oklahoma State (7-4), which finished fifth in the Big 12 south, accepted a bid to play No. 24 Ohio State in the Alamo Bowl on Dec. 29 in San Antonio.

Ohio State (7-4), which placed fifth in the Big Ten, accepted the Alamo Bowl bid Nov. 23 after upsetting then-No. 7 Michigan in its regular season finale.

Both teams will receive at least a \$1 million payout. The Big 12 Colorado (7-5), the Big 12 North champs, accepted an invitation to the Houston Bowl, where it will play Texas-El Paso (8-3) on Dec. 29.

The Buffaloes appeared headed to the Champ Sports Bowl in Orlando, Fla., but wound up losing to the Houston Oilers. When Texas earned a BCS bid and the rest of the Big 12 teams moved up in the pecking order.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	8	8	.500	—
Boston	7	9	.438	1
Philadelphia	6	10	.375	2
Toronto	7	12	.368	2½
New Jersey	4	12	.250	4

Southeast Division				
Orlando	11	5	.688	—
Washington	10	5	.667	½
Miami	11	7	.611	1
Charlotte	4	10	.286	6
Atlanta	2	14	.125	9

Central Division				
Cleveland	11	6	.647	—
Indiana	10	7	.588	1
Detroit	8	8	.500	2½
Milwaukee	4	10	.286	5½
Chicago	2	12	.143	7½

Western Conference

Southwest Division		W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio		15	3	.833	—
Dallas		12	6	.667	3
Houston		7	11	.389	8
Memphis		6	12	.333	9
New Orleans		3	14	.067	12

New Orleans	14	3	.824	0
Northwest Division				
Seattle	15	3	.833	—
Minnesota	11	5	.688	3
Denver	9	7	.563	5
Portland	8	8	.500	6
Utah	8	9	.471	6½

Pacific Division					
Phoenix	14	3	.824	—	
Sacramento	12	5	.706	2	
L.A. Clippers	10	7	.588	4	
L.A. Lakers	10	7	.588	4	
Golden State	4	12	.250	9½	

Golden State		4	2	.667	0
Sunday's games					
Sacramento	119	Boston	105		
Phoenix	121	Portland	99		
Monday's games					
Philadelphia	at Atlanta				
Toronto	at New Jersey				

San Antonio at Chicago
Detroit at Dallas
Miami at Utah
Orlando at Denver
Boston at Golden State
Charlotte at L.A. Clippers

Tuesday's games
Milwaukee at Indiana
New Jersey at Cleveland
New York at Memphis
Dallas at Minnesota
New Orleans at Houston

Golden State at Phoenix
Charlotte at Sacramento

Wednesday's games

Minnesota at Philadelphia
Denver at Washington
Memphis at Atlanta

Toronto at Detroit
New York at New Orleans
Miami at Milwaukee
Seattle at San Antonio
Cleveland at Chicago
Orlando at Utah

Phoenix at L.A. Lakers

Sunday
Kings 119, Celtics 105

BOSTON — Monday 3:37, 7:12, LaGrange 6:11

BOSTON — Weisich 3-8 7-7 13, Larrentz 6-12 2-2 15, Blount 6-9 6-7 18, Pierce 5-14 6-6 16, Payton 3-6 3-4 9, Jefferson 5-11 0-0 10, Davis 4-12 0-0 8, Banks 2-4 2-4 6, Allen 2-4 1-1 5, Gugliotta 0-1 0-0 0, Perkins 2-4 1-2 5. Totals 38-85 28-33 105.

SACRAMENTO — Stojakovic 10 18 1 3 27

SACRAMENTO		Stojakovic 10-18 1-2 21	
Webster 9-16 0-18	Miller 9-15 4-22	Christie	
2-7 1-2 6	Bibby 5-9	5-6 15	Barnes 0-2 0-0 0
Jackson 3-12 2-2	10, Songaila 5-10 4-6 14	Os	
tertag 2-3 0-4	Evans 0-2 0-0	Martin 1-2 1-1	
3, Daniels 0-0 0-0	Totals 46-96	18-23 119	
Boston		36 37 12 25-106	

Boston	36	21	25	-105
Sacramento	18	37	38	26-119
Three-Point Goals—Boston 1-6 (LaFrentz 1-1, Banks 0-1, Welsch 0-1, Davis 0-1, Pierce 0-2), Sacramento 9-18 (Stojakovic 6-9, Jackson 2-7, Christie 1-2). Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Boston 57 (LaFrentz 14), Sacramento				

10 (Webster, Miller 10). Assists—Boston 12
 (Davis, Payton 3). Sacramento 35 (Bibby 10).
 Total fouls—Boston 18, Sacramento 24. Tech-
 nicals—Davis. A—17,317 (17,317).

Score 121 Trail Blazers 90

Suns 121, Trail Blazers 99
PHOENIX — Richardson 12-19 5-5 37, Marion 6-15 2-2 16, Stoudemire 6-15 7-11 19, Johnson 6-11 0-0 15, Nash 4-7 2-2 10, Hunter 4-6 1-1 9, Barbosa 1-6 0-0 3, Jacobsen 2-5 3-4 8, Outlaw 1-3 0-2 1, Lopez 1-3 0-2 2. Total 88-108.

8, 6; Outlaw 1-3 0-0 2, Lampe 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 43-90 20-25 121.

PORTLAND — Abdur-Rahim 7-11 1-1 15, Randolph 11-18 2-2 24, Ratliff 1-4 2-2 4, Anderson 1-6 0-0 2, Stoudamire 4-9 0-0 8, Van Exel 0-2 0-0 0, Miles 4-12 6-8 14, Patterson 6-12 3-5 15, T. Outlaw 1-7 0-0 2, Derynchilla 2-3 0-0 4, Tolfa-

1. Outlaw 7-0 2. Ford 2-1 3. Young 2-2 4. O'Quinn 1-1 5. 0-5 6-10 9. Carlisle 0-1 2-2 2. Totals 37-89 25-30 99.	
Phoenix	29 33 37 22-121
Portland	30 20 26 23-99
Three-Point Goals—Phoenix 15-27 (Richardson 8-12, Johnson 3-4, Marion 2-3, Jacobsen 2-3)	

en 1-3, Barbosa 1-4, Nash 0-1, Portland 0-5
 (Patterson 0-1, Miles 0-1, Van Exel 0-1,
 Stoudamire 0-2, Anderson 0-2, Telfair 0-2).
 Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Phoenix 50
 (Marion 12), Portland 59 (Randolph
 Abdul-Rahim 11). Assists—Phoenix 26 (Nash

11), Portland 18 (Anderson, Abdur-Rahim 3). Total fouls—Phoenix 19, Portland 22. Technicals—Stoudemire, Przybilla. A-16,128 (19,980).

Email Santa
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Include a return mailing address and Santa will respond with a personalized postcard in the mail. Childrens names may also appear in the "News from the North Pole" section of

the European edition of STARS AND STRIPES on the December 20th & 21st. Wishlists must be emailed before December 15th.

Sunday's games		W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix at Sacramento	10	3	.667	0	
L.A. Clippers at Golden State	10	3	.667	0	
Golden State at Phoenix	10	3	.667	0	
Phoenix at Sacramento	10	3	.667	0	

Richardson lifts Suns past Blazers

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore.—Quentin Richardson used some long-range shooting to end the Phoenix Suns' short losing spell. Richardson had his own 12-point run, on four three-pointers, and scored 37 points to lift the Suns to a 121-99 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday.

He made eight threes overall to help Phoenix (14-3) forget about its 97-93 loss Friday to Minnesota that snapped a nine-game winning streak.

"I definitely felt like I couldn't miss," Richardson said. "The way those shots came down I don't think I was going to miss." Richardson matched his career high for made three-pointers, set against Boston last February, and equaled his career best with 12 attempts, reached twice before.

Shawn Marion had 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Suns, who led by as many as 25 points. "For us to regroup and get a good win over a good team, it says a lot about us, especially on the road," Marion said. "Sometimes it takes a little bit more off of you on the road."

The Blazers, coming off a 99-89 loss in Seattle on Saturday night, were led by Zach Randolph with 24 points and 11 rebounds. It was his ninth double-double of the season.

After the game, coach Maurice Cheeks huddled with his players. Later he suggested some lineup changes might be in store for the Blazers, who host Boston on Thursday.

"I'm not saying I'm going to do it but I'll be thinking about it," he said. Forward Ruben Patterson, who plays in a reserve role, agreed that changes are needed for the 8-8 Blazers.

"Whatever happens, happens," Patterson said. "But something has to happen because we're not winning."

The teams went back and forth for most of the first half, until Richardson hit four straight three-pointers to make it 55-47 for the Suns.

His first, with an assist from Steve Nash, gave Phoenix a 46-45 lead. After another with Nash's help, Portland's Damon Stoudamire answered with a jumper, but then Richardson hit his third, with an assist from Amare Stoudemire. His last in the streak came with help from Marion.

His next try, with 3:35 left in the half, just missed, but he made another with a 1:26 to give Phoenix a 60-47 lead.

He was 6-for-9 from three-point range in the first half, topping his season high of five accomplished at Cleveland on Nov. 10.

"Once he gets on a roll like that,



Phoenix Suns forward Quentin Richardson, right, drives past Portland Trail Blazers forward Ruben Patterson on Sunday.

he's very tough to stop," Phoenix coach Mike D'Antoni said.

Richardson was also 5-for-5 from the free-throw line, and the Suns made 20 of 25 foul shots.

Stoudemire, who had 19 points, rubbed it in with an alley-oop dunk followed by another dunk that made it 89-66 for Phoenix in the third period.

Nash added 10 points and 11 assists for the Suns.

"I thought we would be a good team but I think it's important for us to realize that we're a long ways from being as good as we can be," Nash said.

Shereef Abdur-Rahim had 15 points and 11 rebounds for the Blazers.

Kings 119, Celtics 105: Peja Stojakovic had 27 points, including six three-pointers, to help Sacramento win its fourth straight game.

The visiting Celtics blew an 18-point lead after one quarter as the Kings won for the 11th time in 12 games. Sacramento cut the lead to eight points by halftime and seized control with a 12-0 run to start the third.

Mike Bibby scored six of his 15 points during the run, including the go-ahead basket that gave Sacramento the lead for good.

Stojakovic made four of his three-pointers in the third to give the Kings a 13-point lead heading to the fourth, 93-80.

Brad Miller had 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, while Chris Webber had 18 points and 10 rebounds. Bibby added 10 assists and Darius Songaila had 14 points.

Mark Blount scored 18 points for Boston, which had its three-game winning streak snapped. Paul Pierce had 16 points, but none in the second half. Ray LaRocca added 15 points and 14 rebounds, while Jeri Welsh had 13.

The Celtics ran at every opportunity in the first half and shot 52 percent to take a 63-55 lead at intermission. Boston shot 61 percent in the first quarter to grab a 36-18 lead.

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Photos from the Front

Presented by Stars and Stripes Advertising & AIG Europe



ABOVE Members of the Emergency Services Unit from Tikrit, Iraq, move down the street to secure the next house in a neighborhood search. The search, conducted with troops from Task Force 1-18, resulted in the capture of 50 insurgents, more than 60 weapons, and materials for making roadside bombs.
COURTESY OF U.S. Army

LEFT An ensemble from the 1st Infantry Division band entertains Iraqi children at the Al-Alam Primary School in Tikrit in November. The band visited the school along with soldiers from Task Force 1-18 and the 201st Iraqi National Guard, during which the soldiers passed out school supplies to the children.
COURTESY OF U.S. Army



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Too much Tech, too little Bulldogs

Experienced and talented Jackets put a sting into rebuilding Georgia

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — An experienced team coming off a Final Four season. A young team that's just getting started on a major rebuilding job.

The result was predictable.

No. 4 Georgia Tech avenged a year-old loss to its state rival — and then some — with an 87-49 rout of Georgia on Sunday night.

B.J. Elder scored 19 points, Jarrett Jack didn't miss a shot and the Yellow Jackets (5-0) romped to another easy victory on the heels of a 31-point victory over Michigan.

Georgia Tech was eager to reverse one of its most disappointing losses on the way to the Final Four. After opening last season with 12 straight victories, the Yellow Jackets lost 83-80 at Georgia in overtime.

"We were definitely thinking about last year," Isma'il Muhammad said. "We still had a bitter taste in our mouth about that one."

The Bulldogs (1-3) lost four key players from that team and could be one of the worst major-conference programs in the country. They have only seven scholarship players and are forced to rely on several walk-ons.

"We're progressing," freshman Sundiata Gaines said. "Even though we lost by whatever the score was, we played hard."

If wasn't nearly enough against the Yellow Jackets, Jack was 7-for-7 from the field — three of them coming from outside the three-point arc — and made his lone free throw on an 18-point night.

The lone blemish on his stat line: one turnover. Against Michigan, Jack had 11 assists and no turnovers.

"I know it's early, but I don't think I've been around a guy who has played at such a high level from the first day of practice," coach Paul Hewitt said. "He's been playing unbelievable basketball, and I just hope it continues."

Georgia kept it close for about 10 minutes, only to have the Yellow Jackets methodically build a 43-30 halftime lead.

Things really got out of hand over the final 20 minutes. Georgia Tech opened the second half with a 12-0 run, the Bulldogs missing their first seven shots on the way to shooting just 33 percent.

It was Georgia's worst loss ever to the Yellow Jackets, eclipsing a 33-point blowout in 1966.

"Obviously, they are a powerful team, and the game simply got away from us," Georgia coach Dennis Felton said.

Muhammad's driving basket made 20-20 at the game, but 2 minutes into the half, Ra'Sean Dickey made two free throws for a 30-point lead with nearly 12 minutes remaining.



Georgia Tech guard Zam Fredrick II (35) drives past Georgia guard Levi Stukes, left, during the second half of Sunday's game at Alexander Memorial Coliseum in Atlanta. No. 4 Georgia Tech beat Georgia 87-49.

utes remaining. Zam Fredrick swished a three-pointer to give the Yellow Jackets a 40-point cushion with 5 minutes to go.

At that point, Georgia Tech already had pulled out its starters, letting its younger players finish the game.

"In the second half, we stepped it up defensively," Hewitt said. "When you do a good job defensively, the offense comes easy for you."

The only drama occurred early in the second half. Jack scored on a nifty drive to make it 59-32, prompting Georgia to call a time-

out. As the players headed to the bench, Jack got into it with Steve Newman, leading to a brief scuffle at midcourt.

The teams were quickly separated, Jack and Newman were given offending technicals and there were no further problems. "It's an emotional game," Jack said. "Temper flared a little bit, but there are no hard feelings."

Georgia Tech shot nearly 54 percent from the field and out-rebounded the Bulldogs 44-25. Luke Schenscher, Muhammad and Dickey each had 12 points and Schenscher also had 14 rebounds. Levi Stukes led Georgia with 17 points.

Georgia Tech has won its first five games by an average of 26 points. The Jackets' only scare was a 69-59 victory at Illinois-Chicago, their lone road game.

Georgia's woes were epitomized by its freshman center, Dave Bliss. He picked up two fouls in the first 43 seconds, sending him to the bench for the rest of the first half.

He started the second half, but quickly picked up his third foul. After another stint out of the game, he folded out with two more whistles in succession. Bliss was done with 11:06 left, having played just 3 1/2 minutes.

Upsets mark George Washington's perfect weekend

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — George Washington coach Karl Hobbs hopes the Colonials' weekend sweep of ranked teams is a beginning rather than a two-day aberration.

T.J. Thompson scored 27 points and George Washington upset No. 12 Maryland 101-92 on Sunday in the championship game of the BB&T Classic.

"The measuring stick for this team will be at the end of the [season]. ... We took a step further to our dream. We took a step further to our dream," Hobbs said after George Washington's fifth straight victory. "That's what we're focusing on."

J.R. Pinnoch added 22 points and Omar Williams scored 11 of his 14 in the second half for the Colonials (5-1), who beat No. 11 Michigan State 96-83 in the tournament opener.

George Washington's only loss was the season opener at then-No. 1 Wake Forest in the Presaison NIT.

"Even though we lost, we took

Men's Top 25 Roundup

it as a learning experience," Thompson said of the game against the Demon Demons. "We got under control and learned to play together. When the time comes, we band together and don't let nothing get us in our way."

John Gilchrist led Maryland (4-2) with 22 points. Nik Caner-Medley had 16 and James Gist and Travis Garrison each added 12.

Maryland, which made only 14 of 28 free throws, has lost two of three. And the Terrapins had to rely too heavily on their long-range game, connecting on only six three-pointers in 23 attempts.

"We can't be a three-point shooting team first," Maryland coach Gary Williams said. "We have to go inside-out with our offense. We haven't learned that yet and it hurts us in big games."

George Washington claimed its

third BB&T championship and denied the Terrapins their fifth in the tournament's 10-year history.

Maryland overcame an eight-point deficit at halftime to take a 58-57 lead on Gist's tipin 5:46 into the second half. Gist, a freshman reserve, scored 10 points in 3 1/2 minutes to spark the struggling Terrapins.

"We had a couple good opportunities there to maybe take over the game, but GW always seemed to come up with a big play, a big shot," Williams said.

Gist's heroics didn't prevent the Colonials from breaking the Maryland press, getting three-pointers from Thompson and Hall, and Ricky Lucas capped a 15-9 spurt by scoring on an offensive rebound for a 76-69 lead.

Two baskets by Gilchrist got the Terrapins within 83-82, but Williams made a three-pointer from the right side and Pinnoch hit a short jumper to put George Washington up 88-82.

Instead of wilting under the Terrapins' ability to use defense

to produce quick spurts of offense, the Colonials kept their cool.

"Maryland is probably the best team in the country at stealing the ball and then converting," Hobbs said. "They are terrific at doing that so we knew we had to play with some composure."

Pinnoch's slam on a fast break made it 94-89 with 41 seconds left and the Colonials hit seven of eight free throws down the stretch.

George Washington shot 59 percent (20-for-34) from the field and took advantage of 10 turnovers to score 12 points en route to a 49-41 halftime lead. The Colonials were 6-of-9 from beyond the arc.

No. 11 Michigan St. 66, George Mason 60: At Washington, D.C., Maurice Ager scored 13 points to lead the Spartans (4-2) in the third-place game of the BB&T Classic. Alan Anderson and Paul Davis each added 12 points for Michigan State, which had lost two straight.

Lamar Butler had 19 points for the Patriots (3-3).

No. 14 Washington 89, E. Washington 56: At Seattle, Nate Robinson had 20 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Huskies (5-1), coming off a loss last week at Gonzaga.

Freshman Jacob Beitzinger had 14 points for the Eagles (2-3).

No. 21 Arizona 68, No. 15 Mississippi St. 64: At Anaheim, Calif., Channing Frye had 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Wildcats (5-2) in the Wooden Classic, Calif. Arizona led 65-56 with 6:23 remaining and the Bulldogs (6-2) got within two points with 21 seconds left, but they turned the ball over with 5 seconds left.

Winsome Frazier led Mississippi State with 18 points.

No. 16 N.C. State 76, Manhattan 60: At Raleigh, N.C., Julie Hodge bounced back from a brief benching to finish with 17 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists for the Wolfpack (6-0), who trailed for most of the first 15 minutes before finally taking control.

Freshman C.J. Anderson had 18 points and 15 rebounds for the Jaspers (3-2).

Titans' trier no match for Colts offense

BY JON KRAWCZYNSKI

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Peyton Manning doesn't play video games often, but when he does he employs an unusual strategy.

"I always inside kick because I don't feel like playing defense," the Indianapolis quarterback said.

Manning's lights-out play is prompting his real-life opponents to take a similar approach.

Manning threw for 425 yards and three touchdowns to help the Colts overcome a creative game plan from Tennessee in a 51-24 victory Sunday.

The Titans tried three inside kicks in a row in a wild first quarter and punted from their 35 in the third, all in a desperate at-

Manning throws for 425 yards, 3 TDs in 51-24 rout

tempt to keep the Colts' seemingly unstoppable offense off the field.

None of it worked. Edgerlin James ran for 105 yards and two touchdowns, Brandon Stokley had eight catches for a career-high 153 yards and a score, and the Colts returned a blocked field goal for a touchdown to overwhelm the injury-depleted Titans (4-8).

"We felt like our best chance to win this game was to keep their offense off the field," Titans coach Joe Fisher said. "And we told the guys, 'So what if we don't recover it? They get it on the 40-yard line and they're three plays away from being on the 4-yard line anyway.'"

That certainly was the case on Sunday.

Indianapolis (9-3) won its fifth straight and tied an NFL record by topping 400 points for the fourth consecutive game. Only two other teams have done it — the 2000 St. Louis Rams and the 1960 Los Angeles Chargers.

Manning moved within four TD passes of Dan Marino's season record of 48 and tied Johnny Unitas' 45-year-old record by throwing for multiple touchdowns in 12 straight games from the start a season.

But not before getting a scare from the underdogs in the first quarter.

Subbing for the injured Steve

McNair, Billy Volek gave the Colts all they could handle with three touchdown passes to Drew Bennett for a 24-17 lead.

Volek was 6-for-9 for 180 yards and the three scores to Bennett in the back-and-forth quarter. After the touchdown, the Titans attempted inside kicks, recovering two.

"It was fun, but frustrating," said Volek, who finished 21-for-35 for 269 yards, with two interceptions. "I was kind of like a track meet out there. I knew we had to score every time."

Colts coach Tony Dungy said he was prepared for the approach, but it seemed to catch the players off guard.

"Never, in my few years of playing, have I seen that many different things they were showing us early on," linebacker David Thornton said. "The outside kicks, fake punts, just things to keep us rattled and take us out of our game. We kept our composure as a defense and weathered the storm early on."

The Colts responded with 34 straight points that came in a hurry and from all directions.

Manning hit Stokley for a 28-yard TD to tie the game at 24 early in the second quarter.

Indianapolis took the lead for good on Tennessee's next possession when Montae Reesor blocked a 43-yard field goal attempt by Gary Anderson. Rob Morris scooped up the loose ball and rumbled 68 yards for a 31-24 lead.

NFL SCORES, FROM PAGE 28

Eagles 47, Packers 17

Green Bay 9, 3 (4-14)
Pittsburgh 16, 10 (1-15)

PH — Owens 41 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 5:57.

Second Quarter

PH — Westbrook 9 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 10:27.

PH — Westbrook 41 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 10:57.

PH — Smith 6 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 11:24.

PH — Westbrook 12 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 14:48.

GB — Longwell 40, 302. Drive 11 plays, 58 yards, 1:46.

Third Quarter

PH — FG Akers 26, 11:33.

PH — FG Akers 21, 12:04.

PH — FG Akers 21, 12:34.

Fourth Quarter

PH — Westbrook 1 pass from Noll (Longwell kick), 8:26.

PH — Westbrook 17 pass from Noll (Longwell kick), 9:21.

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Patriots romp past rudderless Browns

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Although his team had a 35-point lead in the third quarter, New England coach Bill Belichick still had Tom Brady throwing deep passes and kept the Patriots blazing on nearly every snap.

It was painful for 70,000 fans.

It was sheer pleasure for Belichick, who never knew coaching in Cleveland could be so much fun.

Despised when he was with the Browns a decade ago, Belichick diluted some nasty memories as the Patriots rolled to a 42-15 victory Sunday over the depleted Browns in a horrendous first game of the post-Butch Davis era.

Bethel Johnson returned the opening kick-off 93 yards for a touchdown and Corey Dillon ran for 98 yards and two TDs before halftime as the Patriots (11-1) cruised to their fifth straight victory.

Belichick's return made just days after Davis resigned amid intense media scrutiny and with the Browns (3-9) reeling. If anyone could appreciate Davis' plight it would be Belichick, who received death threats while he coached Cleveland from 1991 to 1995.

Johnson's return set the tone for the Patriots, who came in worried about the Browns capping an emotional week by pulling off an upset for interim coach Terry Robiskie.

"A lot of things bounced our way," Brady said. "It all started with Bethel."

Buccaners 27, Falcons 0: At Tampa, Fla., the Bucs (5-7) kept the first-place Falcons (9-3) from clicking the NFC South by making them Clunk. Vick look ordinary for much of the day.

Simone Rice became the 22nd player in league history to reach 100 sacks, getting Vick on the ground twice and forcing a fumble to set up a touchdown. Rice boosted his career total to 101 in nine seasons.

Derrick Brooks also made a miserable day for the Atlanta Falcons, tipping an ill-advised pass that Dwight Smith intercepted at the end zone and sacked Vick once to force a fumble that led to a field goal.

The loss also ended a four-game winning streak for Atlanta.

Bears 24, Vikings 14: Chad Hutchinson, who was surfing in California a little more than two months ago, made his first Chicago start a memorable one, throwing three TD passes against the visiting Vikings.

Since the Bears (5-7) signed Hutchinson in September following a season-ending knee injury to Rex Grossman, he has spent most of the time as a third-stringer.



New England Patriots running back Corey

Dillon (28) bursts past the Cleveland Browns' defender Chan Thompson (51) on Sunday.

In three previous games, the offense had produced just one touchdown.

Minnesota (7-5) saw its playoff chances hurt for the second straight year by a late-season loss to the Bears.

Jets 29, Texans 7: While Chad Pennington's return from a strained right rotator cuff was far from perfect, Curtis Martin was stellar yet again.

Pennington, back after missing three games, directed three second-half touchdown drives and Martin added his seventh 100-yard game of the season to help the host Jets (9-3) stay in the thick of the AFC playoff race.

The Jets had the solid defensive effort, shutting out the Texans (5-7) in the second half and allowing 10 or fewer points for the third straight game.

Martin had 134 yards on 23 carries, going over the 1,300-yard mark on the season.

Bills 42, Dolphins 32: In a shootout worthy of Dan Marino and Jim Kelly, Drew Bledsoe threw four touchdown passes, and the Bills forced seven turnovers to win in Miami.

The Bills (6-6) have scored 117 points in the past three games, all victories, and are in play-off contention despite opening the season 0-4. They completed a season sweep of the Dol-

phins (2-10), who fell to 0-8 against AFC opponents.

A.J. Feeley threw three touchdown passes, all in the first 1 1/2 minutes, for Miami. He also had a hand in six turnovers, including an interception returned 20 yards for the game's final score by 317-pound tackle Pat Williams with 1:55 left.

Willis McGahee carried 23 times for 91 yards for Buffalo.

Rams 16, 49ers 6: At St. Louis, Steven Jackson ran for 119 yards on 26 carries, his first career 100-yard game, to help the Rams compensate for Marc Bulger's shoulder injury.

Bulger had taken every snap this season before leaving with a sprained right shoulder after a sack by Bryant Young late in the first quarter. His replacement, 38-year-old Chris Chandler, threw his first touchdown pass in more than a year.

The Rams (6-6) added three field goals from Jeff Wilkins, two from 52 yards, and held the 49ers (11-1) to 63 yards rushing on 27 carries.

Panthers 32, Saints 21: At New Orleans, John Kasay kept the Carolina Panthers' late run for a playoff berth on track with six field goals, a team record. It was the Panthers' fourth victory in a row and, the week after, their 5-7 record has them in the middle of the wild-card race.

The defending NFC champions put the game out of reach early and stopped the Saints' second-half effort with two interceptions, including one at the Carolina 11-yard line.

The Saints (4-8) have lost three straight and seven of the last eight games.

Lions 26, Cardinals 12: At Detroit, Kevin Jones ran for 196 yards and a touchdown, ending the Lions' five-game losing streak.

Jason Hanson was 4-for-4 on field goals and Derrick Bryn had two interceptions for the Lions (5-7).

Arizona (4-8) lost its third straight with its third quarterback in four weeks. Rookie John Navarre, who hadn't taken a snap in the regular season, threw four interceptions and was 18-for-39 for 168 yards with a TD.

Redskins 31, Giants 7: At Landover, Md., the Redskins (4-8) broke a three-game losing streak and broke the 20-point barrier for the first time since Joe Gibbs returned as coach, ending their longest such drought since the 1930s.

Clinton Portis ran for 148 yards and scored twice. The Redskins are 4-0 when Portis runs for 100 yards, 0-8 when he doesn't.

Derrick Ward's 22-yard kickoff return in the third quarter was the only score for the Giants (5-7), who have lost five straight.

Steelers 17, Jaguars 16

Pittsburgh 17, Jacksonville 16

Pittsburgh 17, Jacksonville 16

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Big Ben, Steelers closing in on AFC North



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, left, looks for a receiver during the third quarter against the Jacksonville Jaguars Sunday.

BY MARK LONG

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Ben Roethlisberger has practiced the same scenario nearly every day since training camp. He has 1:47 remaining, no timeouts and needs a field goal to win.

No wonder he made it look so easy Sunday night.

The rookie quarterback engineered a drive that set up Jeff Reed's 37-yard field goal with 18 seconds to play that gave the Pittsburgh Steelers a 17-16 victory over Jacksonville and extended their winning streak to 10 games.

"It's something special what he's doing," guard Alan Faneca said. "It's a rookie quarterback supposed to win a game like that on the road in a hostile environment in prime time? Probably not. That says a lot about him. He's special."

The drive covered 56 yards in six plays after Josh Scobee made a 36-yard field goal with 1:55 left to put the Jags ahead.

Roethlisberger was 3-for-4 for 39 yards on the winning drive, and his only incompletion came on a spike after he calmly let the clock run down to leave the Jaguars with little time for a comeback.

"I want the ball in my hands," said Roethlisberger, who set a record for most wins

by a rookie quarterback. "I want to have control of the outcome of the game."

He had plenty of help, too.

Lee Mays made two huge catches, Reed drilled the kick and coach Bill Cowher effectively managed the clock.

Cowher used all three timeouts before the 2-minute warning as Jacksonville was driving for the go-ahead field goal, preserving plenty of time for his offense.

Nonetheless, Roethlisberger got much of the credit.

"He did a phenomenal job standing in the pocket and staying composed," receiver Hines Ward. "That's one of his characteristics."

Roethlisberger was 14-for-17 for 221 yards and two touchdowns. He also ran for 40 yards after three rather sluggish games in an otherwise brilliant first season.

Jacksonville (6-6) had one last shot after a 19-yard completion from Byron Leftwich to Jimmy Smith, which gave Scobee a shot at a 60-yarder. I fell just short and wide right.

"I thought I had it, but it doesn't matter if you miss it by 100 feet or 1 foot," Scobee said.

The Steelers (10-1) are one win from clinching the AFC North and have a tie-breaker for home-field advantage in the AFC over the New England Patriots. They also had a four-game lead over Baltimore with four games left.

Jacksonville, which could have moved into a tie with Baltimore and Denver for the final AFC wild-card spot, lost its third in a row and remains a game behind those two. The Jaguars have had 11 of their 12 games decided in the final minute.

Pittsburgh scored touchdowns on its first two possessions, but was held without a first for the rest of the game until the final drive.

In the first three quarters, the Jags moved inside the Pittsburgh 15 three times, but came out with only six points. Scobee missed a 32-yard field-goal attempt in the second quarter and made two others. "It was as tough a loss as we've had since the AFC championship game in 1999," said Smith, who has been with the Jaguars since their founding as an expansion team 10 seasons ago.

The Jaguars tied it at 7 when Leftwich connected with Troy Edwards for a 22-yard score.

Pittsburgh made it 14-7 on Roethlisberger's 26-yard touchdown pass and Jay Riemersma to cap a 72-yard drive.

"It's frustrating that we didn't get the job done when we pulled ahead," Jags coach Jack Del Rio said. "There were a lot of different ways that game could have ended in our favor. It didn't happen. We didn't come in here to play close. We came in here to win."

Bengals stun Ravens with comeback

BY DAVID GINSBURG

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Carson Palmer had the type of game the Cincinnati Bengals envisioned when they made him the top pick in the 2003 draft: 382 yards passing, three touchdowns and one uplifting comeback victory.

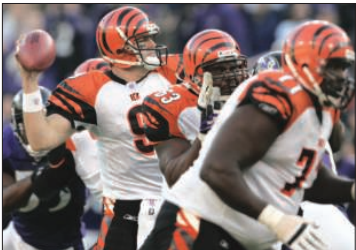
The fact that it occurred during the Baltimore Ravens made his performance that much more impressive — and the win much sweeter.

Palmer threw for 200 yards and three touchdowns in the fourth quarter, and the Bengals rallied from a 17-point deficit to beat the Ravens 27-26 on Sunday. Shayne Graham kicked a 24-yard field goal as time expired, giving Cincinnati its first win in Baltimore in eight tries since 1996.

"It was important to do this against a division team, and to exercise another demon here," said Bengals second-year coach Marvin Lewis. Baltimore's defensive coordinator from 1996-01.

It also was Cincinnati's first road victory against a team with a winning record since 1990, and marked the second-biggest comeback on the road in franchise history — second only to an 18-point rally in 1996 against Baltimore.

The comeback came against a defense that entered the game tied for the NFL lead in fewest points allowed, and for three quarters the Ravens played up to that billing. But a 20-3 advantage disappeared under a barrage of Palmer passes, most of which



Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Carson Palmer, left, is protected by his line as he waits in the pocket to pass during the fourth quarter.

found their way into the arms of T.J. Houshmandzadeh and Chad Johnson.

"For us, that was uncharacteristic," Ravens defensive coordinator Mike Nolan said. Matt Stover's fourth field goal put the Ravens up 26-24 with 1:42 left, but Palmer calmly drove Cincinnati (6-6) into position for the winning kick, covering 60 yards in seven plays.

A 32-yard pass to Houshmandzadeh and a 22-yarder to Johnson were the key plays in the drive.

Palmer, a second-year pro, went 29-for-36 in compiling a career high in passing yardage. Houshmandzadeh had 10 catches for 171 yards, and Johnson amassed 161 yards on 10 receptions.

"T.J. was making plays. Chad was making plays," Palmer said. "And when you give your quarterback a chance to throw the ball like that, against probably the best front seven in this game, these guys are going to get open. The O-line played lights out, and we ended up winning."

Before Sunday, the Bengals had been outscored 73-50 in the fourth quarter.

"Our goal is to make the playoffs, and we couldn't have lost this game and still had that goal," Houshmandzadeh said.

After scoring 58 points a week earlier against Cleveland, the Bengals could muster only a field goal through the opening 45 minutes. But Palmer broke Cincinnati back.

"I think that was definitely a breakout game for him," Bengals guard Eric Steinbach said. "He just led the huddle. We had to score quick, and that's what we did."

Chester Taylor ran for 139 yards and a touchdown in place of the injured Jamal Lewis, but it wasn't enough for the Ravens (7-5) because Palmer was too good.

"He's a gifted young athlete, he's playing well, very poised," said Ravens coach Brian Billick, who conceded that Baltimore's bid to reach the playoffs took a severe blow.

Green leads Chiefs' rally over Raiders

BY JANIE MCCAULEY

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Kansas City Chiefs watched Oakland celebrate several big plays early in the game, and they got angry.

Then, Trent Green took over and nobody could get him to brag about it.

Questionable all week because of sore ribs, Green almost single-handedly brought the Chiefs back in the second half. He completed 14 of 15 passes after halftime for 229 of his 340 yards and connected with Eddie Kennison for a tiebreaking 70-yard touchdown with 2:04 left in Kansas City's 34-27 victory over the Raiders on Sunday.

"From the overall game management standpoint, it was my best game," said Green, who knew how for sure until Friday that he would play.

Green completed his first 12 passes after halftime, and his only incomplete toss was batted down by Sam Williams.

"Trent did a beautiful job," coach Hermie Vermeil said. "Sometimes I take him for granted because you see him do so many wonderful things. I don't know if any quarterback has played a better second half of football than he played today."

Kennison's winning catch came at the 35, then he ran out of the grasp of rookie safety Stuart Schweigert. The Chiefs (4-8) scored on all four of their second-half possessions to end a four-game losing streak.

Kennison finished with eight catches for 149 yards.

Larry Johnson scored two second-half touchdowns, on a 5-yard run and a 10-yard reception from Green. Johnson was given the game ball and was praised by general manager Carl Peterson.

"A lot of people in the media said I wouldn't do what I did today," said Johnson, the team's top draft pick in 2003. "I knew if I got the opportunity, I could do something."

Raiders quarterback Kerry Collins earned cheers for once from Oakland's ungrateful fans, but couldn't pull off a victory in the waning seconds as he did a week ago in a thrilling 25-24 win at Denver in the snow. Collins was sacked in Oakland's final drive and also threw four incomplete passes.

The Raiders (4-8) haven't won at home since beating Tampa Bay in Week 1.

Collins connected with Ronald Curry for two of his three touchdown passes and was 27-for-41 for 343 yards without an interception.

Curry had TD receptions of 34 and 26 yards for the Raiders before being carted off with a 5:46 remaining with what is probably a torn left Achilles' tendon. Jerry Porter caught a 51-yard scoring pass.

Curry was having a career game when he took a hard hit from safety Willie Pile on a 22-yard catch with 5:46 left in the fourth quarter.

Curry had nine catches for a career-high 141 yards — a Raiders' season high — and two touchdowns. He was scheduled to have an MRI on Monday.



San Diego Chargers quarterback Drew Brees is hit from behind by Denver Broncos' John Lynch during the fourth quarter of the Chargers' 20-17 victory Sunday in San Diego. Brees fumbled but San Diego recovered.

Defense sparks Chargers

San Diego controls AFC West after reining in Broncos

By BERNIE WILSON

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Drew Brees doesn't have to win every game for the San Diego Chargers.

On a cold, wet afternoon when San Diego's quarterback wasn't his usual precise self, the defense came up huge in the Chargers' biggest game in a decade.

The Chargers — yes, the Chargers — are in control of the AFC West after escaping with a 20-17 victory over the Denver Broncos on Sunday. San Diego's defense saved the day by intercepting Jake Plummer four times, including in the end zone in the closing minutes, and LaDainian Tomlinson ran for two touchdowns.

"Our defense carried us today," Tomlinson said. "They were the reason we won this game."

The Chargers (9-3) clinched their first winning season since 1995 and took a two-game lead in the division over Denver (7-5).

Now all that's left for Tomlinson, Brees, Antonio Gates and rest of the Chargers to do in this surprising season is to clinch a playoff berth, which they haven't done since 1995.

San Diego is on a six-game winning streak for the first time since going 6-0 to open the 1994 season, when it was the only Super Bowl appearance. Overall, the Chargers have won eight of nine.

Brees, the biggest reason behind the Chargers' turnaround from last year's NFL-worst 4-12 record, had his least-productive game of the season. He completed just 14 of 27 passes for 106 yards and no touchdowns. His club-record streak of 194 passes without an interception ended in the first quarter when he overthrew Gates and was picked off by Kenny McKinstry.

Points were hard to come by in this game, but true to the team's AFL roots, it wasn't boring.

The Chargers scored only three points in the second half, when they were bailed out by their defense.

The biggest play came with 3:39 left after the Broncos drove to the Chargers' 7-yard line. Safety Jerry Wilson intercepted Plummer's pass in the end zone after cornerback Drayton Florence — who had an interception in the opening minutes — tipped a fade pass intended for Rod Smith.

"I was telling those cornerbacks, 'Be aggressive and just get a hand on the ball,'" Wilson said. "Especially in this weather, it was bound to happen."

Florence was making just his second start of the season because cornerback Sammy Davis is out indefinitely with a leg injury.

"I just played through his hands and read his eyes and made a big play," Florence said.

Plummer said throwing the fade route was just one of his options on the play.

"It was a jump-ball situation. I trust Rod. He went up there and almost had it. I wish I handed the ball off but you can't go back," Plummer said.

One drive earlier, the Broncos drove to the 14 but had to settle for Jason Elam's 31-yard field goal after Jamar Fletcher and Clinton Hart batted down passes by Plummer.

Tomlinson finished with 113 yards on 30 carries, pushing him past the 1,000 yard mark for the fourth straight season.

Plummer threw for 278 yards, but completed just 16 of 40 passes for no touchdowns.

Eagles ascend to new heights on McNabb's five TDs

By DAN GELSTON

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb insisted his best is yet to come.

It's sure going to be tough to top his performance Sunday in the Philadelphia Eagles' 47-17 victory over Green Bay.

McNabb threw a career-high five touchdown passes, had a team-record 464 yards passing and completed his first 14 passes.

"Week in and week out, we're out to get better. We're working on different things," McNabb said. "Our expectations are at the highest point, which is to win the Super Bowl. I don't think you can get any higher than that."

"We haven't played that perfect game yet. We hope it comes at the right time."

The NFC East champion Eagles are 11-1 for the third time in team history.

Brian Westbrook had 11 catches for 156 yards and three TDs, and Terrell Owens caught eight passes for 161 yards and one score.

McNabb finished 32-for-42 and broke the passing record held by Randall Cunningham (447 yards vs. Washington in 1989).

"We spread the ball around. Everyone contributed," McNabb said. "We sent that message out that week in and week out we come ready to play."

Since losing to Pittsburgh 27-3 last month, the Eagles have won four in a row by at least 20 points, outscoring their opponents 151-50.

"I don't think any defense can stop us," Westbrook said. "The thing that is going to stop us ourselves."

It certainly wasn't Green Bay.

Philadelphia snapped Green Bay's six-game winning streak, but the Packers (7-5) remained tied with Minnesota for first place in the NFC North.

Brett Favre threw two interceptions that led to Philadelphia's first two scores. His streak of games with a TD pass was snapped at 36, second in NFL history to Johnny Unitas' 47 straight.

"I don't think that we put up much effort or that we put up much of a game going up against them, but they are pretty damn good," Favre said.

A rematch of a thrilling playoff



PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/KRT

Safety Brian Dawkins celebrates Sunday after making one of the Eagles' two interceptions against Packers quarterback Brett Favre.

game 11 months ago, this one never lived up to the hype. The Eagles scored four TDs in the second quarter, led 35-3 at halftime and rested most of their starters in the fourth quarter.

They made their mark in the team record book before that. Owens and Westbrook gave the Eagles two 150-yard receivers in a game for the first time since 1962. Owens set the team record for TD receptions in a season (41), snapping a tie with Hall of Famer Tommy McDonald (twice) and Mike Quick Owens also broke the team record with his seventh 100-yard game.

"I just thank God for Donovan. It's special. I can't put into words what he means to me," Owens said.

McNabb threw TD passes of 41 yards to Owens; 9, 41 and 12 yards to Westbrook; and a 6-yard kick to L.J. Smith. David Akers kicked four field goals in the second half.

Eagles coach Andy Reid broke Gressny Neale's franchise record with his 67th win in his sixth season in Philadelphia. Reid is 67-34, with three trips to the NFL title game, in six seasons.

Favre finished 14-for-29 for 131 yards. Running back Ahman Green wasn't a factor in his first game after sitting out with bruised ribs last week.

Sunday's NFL stars:

Quarterbacks

- Donovan McNabb, Eagles, threw a career-high five touchdown passes in the first half and finished with a team-record 464 yards passing in a 47-17 win over Green Bay.
- Peyton Manning, Colts, was 25-of-33 for 422 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions in a 51-24 win over Tennessee.
- Carson Palmer, Bengals, went 29-for-36 for a career-high 382 yards and three touchdowns and led a 17-point fourth-quarter comeback in a 27-26 win over Baltimore.
- Trent Green, Chiefs, completed 14 of 15 passes after halftime for 229 of his 340 yards and hit Eddie Kennel for a tiebreaking 70-yard touchdown with 2:04 left in Kansas City's 34-27 victory over Oakland.



Running backs

- Kevin Jones, Lions, ran for 196 yards on 26 carries, both career highs for the rookie, and a 29-yard touchdown run in a 26-17 win over Arizona.
- Clinton Portis, Redskins, ran for 148 yards on 31 carries, giving him 1,093 yards for the season. He had a 1-yard touchdown run and caught a shovel pass for another score.
- Steven Jackson, Rams, ran for 113 yards on 26 carries.
- Reggie Bush, Saints, had a first career 100-yard game, to help St. Louis beat San Francisco 16-6.

Receivers

- Brian Westbrook, Eagles had 11 catches for 156 yards and three touchdowns.
- Terrell Owens caught eight catches for 161 yards and one score in a



- 47-17 win over Green Bay.
- Brandon Stokley, Eagles, finished with eight catches for a career-high 153 yards and a TD, while teammate Marvin Harrison caught four passes for 106 yards and a touchdown in Indianapolis' 24-21 victory against Denver.
- Ronald Curry, Raiders, had nine catches for a career-high 141 yards; ■ a season high for the team ■ and two touchdowns in Oakland's 34-27 loss to Kansas City.

Defense

- DT Pat Williams, Bills, lumbered his 317 pounds 20 yards to a TD with an interception, one of five picks by the Bills, in a 20-12 win at Cleveland.
- LB Donnie Edwards, Chargers, had 20 tackles in a 20-17 victory against Denver.
- 5 Will Dumas, Ravens, had 14 tackles against Cincinnati.
- DE Simon Rice and LB Derrick Brooks, each had two sacks in Tampa Bay's 27-10 shutout of Atlanta.
- Safety Brian Dawkins, Eagles, picked off two passes by Daunte Culpepper in Chicago's 24-14 victory over Minnesota.

SPORTS



Bonds, Giambi, Sheffield
unlikely to be punished
by MLB, Page 27

BCS gives Auburn, Cal boot

USC, Oklahoma
head to Orange;
Texas gets Rose

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

The Bowl Championship Series never fails to leave a team or two feeling unfulfilled.

This year, it's Auburn and California.

Southern California and Oklahoma finished atop the final Bowl Championship Series standings Sunday and will meet in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 4 in a title game that — again — might not end the argument



over who is No. 1.

Auburn, 12-0 just like the top two teams, finished third in the BCS points system that relies on The Associated Press and coaches polls, plus computer ratings. So the Tigers will have to settle for a Sugar Bowl berth against Virginia Tech on Jan. 3.

"They got the edge because they were 1

and 2 all year, and even if they did struggle to beat someone or had a tough game, no one [said] anything," Auburn quarterback Jason Campbell said. "We beat Tennessee twice, we beat Georgia, we beat LSU."

"Last year, Oklahoma lost in the Big 12 championship game and they still got to go."

"It just shows it's a faulty system, and we've got to do something to change it up."

Aaron Rodgers
Cal quarterback

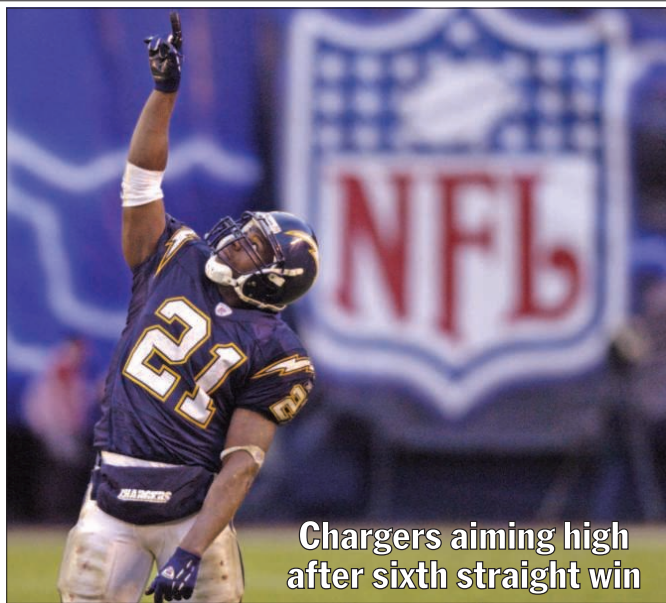
At least Auburn gets to play in one of the glamour games.

California was left out of the BCS altogether after Texas passed the Golden Bears for fourth in the final standings. The Longhorns (10-1) will play Big Ten co-champion Michigan (9-2) in the Rose Bowl. The Bears (10-1) were relegated to the Holiday Bowl, certainly not the showcase they were hoping for as the fourth-ranked team in the country.

"It just shows it's a faulty system, and we've got to do something to change it up," Cal quarterback Aaron Rodgers said. "I bet Auburn is pretty ticked, too."

Southern California finished with 9770 in the standings, and Oklahoma had 9681. Auburn's grade was 9331. Oklahoma's strong computer rankings kept the Sooners ahead of the Tigers in the BCS standings, while Southern California held on to first place thanks to the polls.

SEE BCS ON PAGE 28



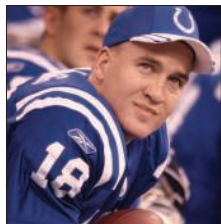
Chargers aiming high
after sixth straight win

Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who ran for 113 yards and two touchdowns, celebrates San Diego's victory over Denver. The Chargers secured their first winning season since 1994 and have a two-game lead in the AFC West. See Page 35 for details.



McNabb keeps Eagles
on high with 5 TDs
against Packers

Page 35



Manning's old tricks
trump new ones
tried by Titans

Page 33

Richardson makes sure Suns' dry spell isn't long

Page 29

